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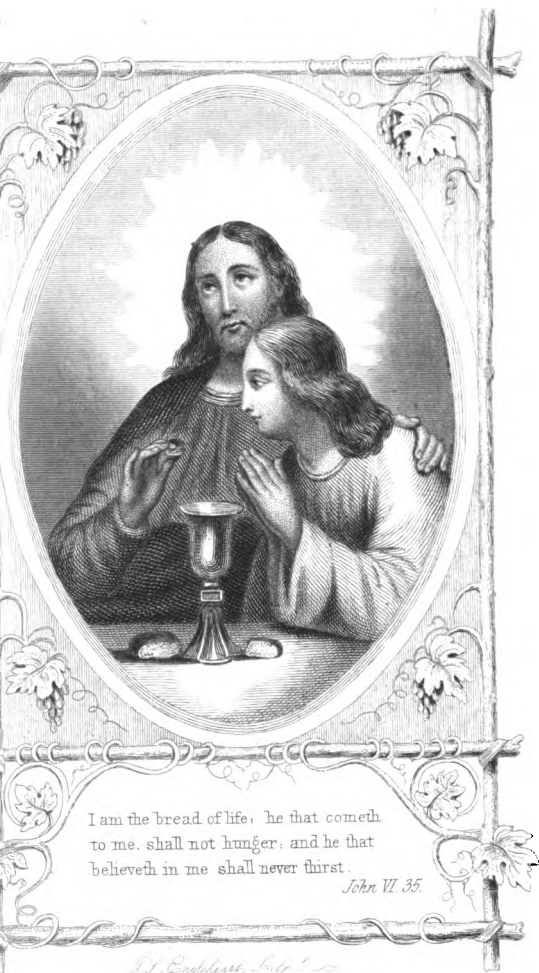
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I am the bread of life, he that cometh
to me, shall not hunger; and he that
believeth in me shall never thirst.

John VI. 35.

J. S. English, Sculp.

THE ALTAR MANUAL;

OR

DEVOTIONS

For Confession and Communion.

Edited by

EDWARD CASWALL,

PRIEST OF THE ORATORY OF ST. PHILIP NERI.

• "I will go in to the Altar of God."

THIRD EDITION.

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PREFACE.

The *Délices des Ames Pieuses*, from which the Devotions contained in this volume are taken, although little known in this country beyond the walls of the college or convent, is highly popular in France, where it has passed through numerous editions. The present translation is from the fourteenth edition, and comprises all that portion of the second volume which comes between p. 343 and p. 614. Translated, in the first instance, by a lady very nearly and dearly connected with the Editor, since gone to her rest; and revised for this, its third edition, with the most scrupulous care; it is hoped that it may be found a valuable addition to the Catholic devotional library.

To prevent misapprehension it may be well to add, as regards the exercises for communion, that for their profitable use, it is by no means necessary to go through the whole exercise; it will be sufficient to stop at discretion, at the close of a section, leaving the remainder of the exercise for another occasion.

Edgbaston,
May 6th, 1859.

CONTENTS.

Confession as preparatory to Communion.

PAGE.

INSTRUCTION ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE, IN A COLLOQUY BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND THE SOUL, ...	1
---	---

EXERCISE FOR CONFESSION.

Before Confession, ...	17
After Confession, ...	29

A SHORTER EXERCISE FOR CONFESSION.

Before Confession, ...	36
After Confession, ...	40

Meditations and Prayers for Communion.

INSTRUCTION ON HOLY COMMUNION, IN A COLLO- QUY BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND THE SOUL, ...	49
--	----

SECOND INSTRUCTION ON HOLY COMMUNION, ...	69
---	----

FIRST EXERCISE FOR COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections, ...	97
Before Communion, ...	100
After Communion, ...	107

SECOND EXERCISE FOR COMMUNION.**METHOD OF ASSISTING AT MASS, WHEN ABOUT
TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION.**

Preparatory Reflections, ...	116
Before Mass, ...	123
During Mass, ...	128
After Communion, ...	137

THIRD EXERCISE FOR COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections, ...	145
Before Communion, ...	148
After Communion, ...	159

FOURTH EXERCISE FOR COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections, ...	171
Before Communion, ...	172
After Communion, ...	183

FIFTH EXERCISE FOR COMMUNION.

Before Communion, ...	196
After Communion, ...	210

Visits to the Most Holy Sacrament.

Aids to Meditation in the Presence of the Blessed Sacrament, ...	241
Invitation to pray at the foot of the Holy Altar, ...	248

CONTENTS.

vii

	PAGE.
Exercise before the Blessed Sacrament, ...	252
Consecration of ourselves to Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament, ...	257
Reparation to Jesus Christ present in the Holy Sa- crament, ...	258
A Paraphrase of the 83rd Psalm, ...	259
On Devotion to the Sacred Heart, ...	268
Reparation to the Sacred Heart, ...	270
Consecration of ourselves to the Sacred Heart, ...	271
Prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, ...	274
Act of Spiritual Communion, ...	275
Prayer before a Crucifix, or Picture of Christ Cru- cified, ...	276



PSALMS, ONE OR MORE OF WHICH MAY BE RE- CITED WITH PROFIT BEFORE OR AFTER COM- MUNION, ...	277
HYMNS ON THE BLESSED EUCHARIST, WITH OTHERS, ...	292

THE
ALTAR MANUAL.

Confession as preparatory to Communion.

INSTRUCTION ON THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE,
IN A COLLOQUY BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND
THE SOUL.

Jesus Christ. I have often spoken to you, my daughter, concerning all your duties; remember, then, what you have received and heard; observe it, and do penance; for who is pure before God? “A just man shall fall seven times, and shall rise again.”

Soul. O Jesus! what wouldest thou have me to do? I find, alas! in my heart (with the exception of such good desires as Thou Thyself hast implanted there) nought but an unfathomable abyss, full of weakness and misery. If I examine into my conscience by the light of thy law, I discover there only filth and corruption. If I question it seriously, its reply is that I deserve eternal

death. What shall I do then? What shall I say? "God be merciful to me a sinner."

Jesus Christ. I know, my daughter, that man is frail, and inclined to evil from his birth; and it is for this reason that I have had compassion on him, and prepared for him, in my mercy, an efficacious means of regaining my favour, whensoever he truly repents. Baptism, as you have been taught, by the application of my merits, sufferings, and death, washes away that original sin in which the children of Adam are born; as also whatever actual sins they may have committed before being regenerated by water and the Holy Ghost. But Baptism cannot be repeated; and how few Christians are there who preserve till death the grace which this Sacrament has conferred upon them! In order, then, to succour those unfortunate souls whom Satan has seduced anew, and that they may not remain without hope, I have instituted another Sacrament, namely, Penance, as a fountain of life, in which the guilty soul may be purified and renewed; and have willed that My Blood should cleanse in this Sacrament all those who confess their sins, and sincerely desire forgiveness of them. And not only do I receive them when they return to Me, but I warn and exhort them without ceasing, and spare no pains in

order to ensure their salvation. "I am the good Shepherd," who goeth to seek upon the mountains his lost sheep. Never doubt, then, of my mercy, nor of my love. "Can a woman forget her infant, so as not to have pity on the son of her womb? and if she should forget, yet will not I forget thee."

Soul. How greatly thy words console me, Lord; and how does thy love touch my heart! Ah, if men only knew Thee, if they but knew "the gift of God, and who He is that speaketh unto them," they could not resist such transporting goodness. But they shut their ears to thy voice, O my Jesus! they struggle against thy mercy, and seek out pretexts for their own destruction. Preserve me, Lord, from the misery of imitating their conduct; and, since Thou hast vouchsafed, in thy mercy and infinite charity, to institute the Sacrament of Penance for the remission of sins, teach me in what manner I ought to approach it, so that it may prove beneficial to me.

Jesus Christ. Begin, my daughter, by entreating the Holy Ghost to enlighten you; and then, descending into yourself, search out your conscience. Examine, as in the presence of God, your thoughts, words, and works; in brief, every secret thing your heart contains. Consider attentively wherein you have failed; how many things you have

done, which were forbidden you; and left undone, which were commanded you. Endeavour to discover the secret motives by which you have been influenced, as well as the circumstances which have aggravated your faults; and strive to look upon them in that light, in which you know and feel that God will regard them at the last day. Read attentively some book containing directions for the examination of conscience; and enter upon your important task neither with levity (which were at once offensive to God, and fatal to yourself), nor yet with excessive inquietude and too great excitement. Sincerity, candour, a real desire to show yourself to my priest such as you actually are, and an absence of self-deception as to the real state of your soul—these are the qualifications for this Sacrament which I principally require at your hands. “The simplicity of the just shall direct them.” God blesses the upright intention, but abandons and rejects those who tempt Him in their hearts.

Soul. O Jesus! I fully see the necessity of a strict self-examination before confession; otherwise, we are exposed to the almost certain danger of profaning, by an unpardonable negligence, the Sacrament instituted to reinstate us in thy grace and favour. He, who implores forgiveness, must needs declare

the faults which he desires to be forgiven him. He who is sick, if he wishes to be cured, must needs reveal his malady to the physician, with all its symptoms. I am but a child in thy ways, O my God! but truths so simple as these are easily comprehended by the weakest capacity; and even if I understood them not, Thou hast spoken, and this is enough: Thy Church commands; I need no other motive to obey.

Jesus Christ. When the conscience has been well sifted and thoroughly probed, with what regret, with what pain, will it not be filled! It was after such a self-examination that the man after my own heart exclaimed: "Against Thee only have I sinned, and done evil in Thy sight. Wash me yet more from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin; for I know my iniquity, and my sin is always before me. There is no health in my flesh, because of Thy wrath; there is no peace for my bones, because of my sin. For my iniquities are gone over my head, and, as a heavy burden, are become heavy upon me. My sores are putrified and corrupted, because of my foolishness. I am become miserable, and am bowed down even to the end. I walked sorrowful all the day long; I have laboured in my groanings. Every night I will wash my bed, I will water my couch with my tears."

Ah! if men could but know what sin is! if they could but see it as God sees it, then one single voluntary sin—the violation of one single law of God—would inspire them with more profound horror than the destruction of the entire universe.

What must the sinner say at the sight of his offences? He must say: "I have committed an evil, which tends towards nothing less than the annihilation of God Himself, the sole essential existence." He must say: "I have placed a great gulf betwixt God and myself, and eternally should I have to continue separated from Him—separated from light, and from all that is good, and condemned for ever to hell by His justice—had not Christ, the Word made flesh, come to redeem me, in His ineffable mercy, from that incomprehensible misery, by suffering and dying in my stead."

Overcome by such reflections, he will prostrate himself at the foot of My Cross, and pierced to the heart at the sight of this sacred emblem of salvation: "This blood," he will exclaim, "this Divine blood has flowed between earth and heaven, and it was I who spilt it. These feet, these hands—it was I who pierced them; my hands laid open this sacred side; my hands placed upon this adorable head a crown of thorns."

Thus will he cry out; and his repentance,

his tears, his love, will prepare him to receive, by the ministry of the priest, the grace of justification.

Soul. O Jesus! now that Thou hast shown me how dreadful a thing sin is, I shall no longer be able to support the sight of my transgressions. Can it be, that I have been one of those enemies who fastened Thee to the cross? Can it be, Lord, that, day by day, I renew thy sufferings; that, day by day, merely to satisfy a whim, a caprice, I open again thy sacred wounds, and cause thy precious blood to flow? The thought fills me with dismay, and I hardly feel courage to implore thy mercy: nevertheless, "a contrite and humble heart, O God! Thou wilt not despise." The very night of thy passion Peter denied Thee thrice. Thou didst but cast on him a single glance: he went forth; he wept bitterly; and his sin was forgiven him. The woman who was a sinner watered thy feet with her tears, and Thou saidst: "Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." Grant, O Jesus! that I may love Thee as she did, and, like her, may be forgiven.

Jesus Christ. To obtain this forgiveness, my daughter, you must, in addition to what I have already said, cherish a sincere and firm resolution never to offend Me more, to fly

the occasions of sin, and to fight courageously against your evil inclinations. Without this, your repentance will be but false and unreal: true contrition is known by its fruits.

Soul. I am firmly resolved, Lord, by thy grace, never again to relapse into the faults which I have been guilty of hitherto; and to struggle against my temptations, which, by thy aid, I hope to conquer. Covered with the leprosy of sin, I present myself before Thee, and say, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

Jesus Christ. I desire that it may be so with you, as much, and even more than yourself, my daughter. Go, then, and "show thyself to the priest, according to the commandment." Go with a profound humility, with a heart full of faith, of hope, of love, and of sorrow. Conceal nothing; disguise nothing. He who lies to the Lord, shows himself to be His enemy. Lying lips destroy the soul. Tempted by Satan, the father of lies, Ananias lied to the Holy Ghost, and was immediately struck dead. Woe to the fool who thinks to deceive Me, and who comes to Me without having truth upon his lips and in his heart. "It were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea."

Confession ought to be full: it admits neither of reserve nor of concealment. Whosoever conceals one single mortal sin in confession, deprives himself of all the benefit of absolution; and leaves the sacred tribunal with all his former crimes upon him, and that of sacrilege in addition. He comes to seek peace, and he carries away with him anxiety and distress. He comes to be blessed, and he returns laden with curses. Stay away from confession altogether, rather than approach to stain still more a conscience already defiled. If you have no desire to be cleansed and purified in my blood, at least, do not profane it. Beware of provoking the judgment which hangs over you; and draw not down upon yourself a double punishment. Think, oh! think "how terrible a thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God!"

Soul. How much, O Lord! thy words enlighten me, at the same time that they terrify me! It is so easy to be tempted, so very easy to deceive one's self; and there is so much at stake. Forsake me not, O my Jesus! Protect me; instruct me. Thyself discover to me all the secret windings of my heart, concerning which I know so little.

Jesus Christ. In the first place, then, my daughter, humble yourself profoundly in my presence; and in the bitterness of your heart,

consider well all that you owe to the Divine justice. Acknowledge that it is good for you to be humbled; that it is the necessary consequence of sin, and a portion of its expiation, provided we submit willingly. But if you cannot make up your mind to submit yourself willingly to shame and confusion now in the presence of one man, my minister; know that you will have to submit to a much greater confusion in the presence of all men, at the day of judgment. Call to your remembrance those words of the Holy Ghost, "He that hideth his sins shall not prosper; but he that shall confess and forsake them shall obtain mercy." Reflect that your all is at stake; that this is a matter of salvation or of condemnation; that you are about to choose between the eternity of hell and the eternity of heaven. Transport yourself in thought to the hour of death; to that hour when the world's pageantry, and all the vain imaginations which now fascinate and absorb you, will disappear like a dream. Consider what will be your feelings then, as to the course which you ought to have pursued.

All the Saints, without exception, whenever they had the least apprehension of having sinned, confessed themselves. All penitents have had to contend, like yourself, with those natural repugnances to confession,

which self-love and pride create; and if they now are in glory, it is because they triumphed over those feelings.

It may happen that, when preparing for confession, you may feel strongly tempted to conceal a fault. On such occasions lose not a moment, but at once prostrate yourself at the foot of the Cross, and there, in my presence, make a solemn promise to declare your sin. This done, dismiss it from your mind until the time of confession; and then let it be the first thing of which you accuse yourself, in order that the spirit of pride and deception may not have time to shake your resolution, and expose you again to danger. Alas! whatever the disorder may be to which you have yielded yourself up, you need never fear astounding those to whom I have given the charge of receiving the confidences of sinners. They know the corruption of human nature; and, so far from contempt gaining entrance into their hearts, my law interdicts it as a sin. Ah, what are they themselves? Do they not, as much as others, stand in need of compassion, support, and succour? All men have cause to blush in God's presence; but in the presence of one another they can but bemoan their common misery, and interchange pity for pity. Whoever knows himself despises himself, and

none but himself; for he knows not but that the Holy Ghost may be working in the depth of that heart which, to all appearance, is most corrupt. My ways are inscrutable, and I am all-powerful in causing, "where sin had abounded, my grace to abound much more."

Soul. How blessed a thing it is, Lord, to obey thy precepts with simplicity! and how weak, how frivolous, are the motives which turn us aside from this obedience! How true it is, that they ever take their rise in the passions; in attachment to the pleasures of sense; in impatience under a salutary yoke; and in pride, which revolts against humiliations, however justly deserved! O Jesus! create within me an humble and clean heart. This only do I desire on earth.

Jesus Christ. It is in the Sacrament of Penance, my daughter, that I purify the heart. Therein will I cleanse thee; and thereby will I diffuse within thee my gifts, so that, "sowing in tears, thou shalt reap in joy." Among the first-fruits of a good confession is this, that it assuages the troubles of the soul, and fills it with a calm of inexpressible sweetness: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour"—who are oppressed with grief for your sins, who carry about with you the burden of a guilty conscience:—"Come unto Me, and I will refresh you, and ye shall find rest to your

souls." "I desire not the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." O ye whom I have redeemed with my blood, why do ye refuse to live? Wherefore will ye die? What attraction can sin have for you? What is it but a heavy burden here below? In the depth of every heart intoxicated by the pleasures of the world, there lies a worm which secretly gnaws its victim. Suffer not yourself to be deceived by the apparent prosperity of the children of darkness. It is delusive, and lasts but for a short time.

Soul. I know, O Lord! that when earthly prosperity falls to the lot of the wicked, they are only the more to be pitied; since it quickly passes away, and is followed by a miserable eternity. How greatly deceived are those, who think them happy in the gratification of all their desires! Whenever I have yielded to any passion, no sooner was the false pleasure arising from it over, than I experienced a profound uneasiness and inexplicable sensation of misery. Something, I knew not what, troubled me interiorly. I became a burden to myself; I sought for consolation from without; I would have fled from myself, but had not the power. The thought of my sin pursued me. Although concealed from every eye, I fancied that others detect-

ed it by simply looking at me—that my words, gestures, and looks betrayed it. A crowd of painful, restless thoughts wearied my mind at night, and agitated me even during my sleep. I feared contempt and shame; I feared Thy judgments, and I could not find rest until I had accused myself at the tribunal of Penance. Then it was that I enjoyed peace again; and that peace was a thousand times sweeter than the guilty pleasure for which I had lost it.

Jesus Christ. Another fruit of a good confession, my daughter, is, an increase of courage, and light; and of strength to resist the attacks of the tempter. The counsels of the priest (which you ought to listen to with as much attention and humility as if you were listening to Myself) support, enlighten, and direct the penitent; while the grace of the Sacrament acts upon the heart, and strengthens the will.

Soul. There can be no one, methinks, Lord, who has not had experience of this consoling truth. On coming from confession, who can have the heart to sin? Who, on the contrary, does not feel in himself a repugnance towards evil, a relish for virtue, and a desire to belong to Thee, which extinguishes every other feeling? At such a time no good work, however painful, appears

difficult; and there is nothing that one would not willingly suffer, in order to please Thee.

Jesus Christ. Learn the reason of this, my daughter. Ever since the fall of Adam, human life has been nothing else than a perpetual warfare against the devil, and against the inclinations of corrupt nature; and duty, merit, salvation, have consisted in fighting and conquering, as it is written: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation, for when he hath been proved, he shall receive the crown of life, which God hath promised to them that love Him." But all do not resist as they ought. They yield to concupiscence which entices and deludes them. "Then, when concupiscence hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin, when it is completed, begetteth death." In this state man, separated from God, hates him with a hatred resembling that of a fallen spirit; and while he hates God, he hates at the same time all that is good, goodness and God being one and the same, since "every best gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."

Now, the Sacrament of Penance not only remits sins, but also re-establishes in the soul the sovereign love of God; and this is the reason why, after confession, she feels attracted towards what is good, and full of strength

against temptation. This is the reason why she then experiences a delicious peace—the foretaste of that eternal rest which the Saints enjoy, in the immutable possession of Him whom they solely love. Yes, the calm of a pure conscience, in which my love reigns supreme, is nothing else but the very joy of heaven itself, tempered for a time by the sadness of exile. The soul desires nothing more of earth; but, fixed only upon her immortal country, she bemoans the length of her pilgrimage, longs for her deliverance, and says: “Who will give me wings like a dove, and I will fly away and be at rest.” Full of this hope, and justified by repentance, by the sincere confession of her sins, and by the pardon which she has received in Absolution, her sweetest consolation is to unite herself to Me; to nourish herself on the Bread of Angels; and to draw from the Eucharistic Feast, in a still more abundant measure, the waters of everlasting life; for there it is that I truly give Myself whole and entire to those who seek Me, so that they may become one with Me, even as I am one with my Father.

Soul. Ah, Lord, who would not desire to be cleansed from his sins, were it only in order to partake of this marvellous grace? Make me worthy, O my Jesus! to sit down at Thy holy table, and teach me how to present myself there.

EXERCISE

FOR

CONFESSION.

§ 1.

The Soul preparing herself for Confession.

LORD, my reason is but a spark from Thy light; increase its clearness, not in order that it may glitter with a barren brightness, which only nourishes pride; but in order that, receiving the ray of Thy Divine grace into the abyss of my miseries, I may advance at once in repentance and in humility. Rather would I know myself than be acquainted with the secrets of all the sciences that exist. I desire to see all my corruptions. O my God! conceal them not from me. The more I hate myself, the more shall I love Thee. Ah, how empty and desolate my heart feels: sullied, weakened, and deadened as it has been by sin. Come, and fill it with Thyself. Raise up this languishing stalk, whose root is consumed and flower withered by a secret worm. Restore its perfume, that it may ascend unto Thee as sweet incense. I am displeased with

myself. My iniquities are become a burden which overwhelms me. A secret weariness oppresses me. I drag myself languidly from place to place; and change of spot leaves me a prey to the same distaste for everything. My customary amusements no longer have any charm for me. Fresh objects are unable to divert me. My friends have no power to console me. Whence comes this weariness, this grief, this anguish, O my God? From remorse at having abandoned Thee. The earth languishes when deprived of the sun; the grass withers for want of dew; man sinks when oppressed by famine; the infant wails in the absence of its mother; and the sinner feels an inexpressible grief when separated from his God. Who will deliver me from this pain? Can the world do so? Can death do so? Or is it Thou, O Lord? Alas! the world is but peopled with sinners such as myself; and death will but deliver me over to thy sacred tribunal, where I shall fall into the hands of thy justice. Far better, therefore, it is, that I should, without a moment's delay, give myself up to the tribunal of thy mercy. The juice of salutary herbs restores purity to the blood; rest and sleep renew the strength of the wearied; the Sacrament of Penance reconciles the guilty soul to her God. I will plunge myself into the wondrous pool which

thine Angel stirs. I will knock at the door of that place of refuge, which Thou hast opened to all repentant sinners; of that paternal abode, from whence Thou extendest thine arms to the prodigal son. There shall I taste peace. There shall I recover my lost happiness. There shall I enjoy all the sweetness of those touching words: "Come to Me, all ye that labour and are burdened, and I will refresh you."

§ 2.

On the Benefits derived from Confession.

The afflicted feel the need of a consoler, the sick of a physician, the repentant criminal of a merciful judge. It is the same in the case of the soul. Her sufferings, her wounds, her errors, arise from one and the same source; and He alone who has power to absolve her from her sins can, at the same time, cure and console her. Now, where do we find this character, except in the Priest of Jesus Christ? He alone is empowered to receive the confession of our sins, the recital of our diseases and miseries; and the pardon, that effaces our guilt, becomes the remedy also of our sorrows. We cannot divide our souls into two parts, so that the

one part shall console the other. Our infirmities teach us, but too impressively, the need we have of some other voice besides our own, to cause peace to descend into our troubled hearts. We cannot constitute ourselves, at the same time, the judge and the accused: could we succeed in doing so, we should but become the victims of perpetual solicitude; anxious, on the one hand, to acquit ourselves, and afraid, on the other, of judging ourselves too leniently. But when judgment proceeds from the venerable lips of one who has no self-interested bias either towards our condemnation or acquittal, then undoubtedly it must succeed in restoring peace to our minds. In every system of religion, under which the Sacrament of Penance has no existence, or from which it has been discarded, the soul must needs be in continual doubt as to whether God has pardoned her. Ever on the watch against herself, a painful anxiety must necessarily interrupt her quiet; and the better disposed she is, the more fear will she have of justifying herself. In such a case, it becomes impossible for her to abandon herself without reserve to the love of God, which she feels within her; and the end at which she aims is never accomplished. "Confess your sins one to another," says St. James. Our Lord gave to His Apostles and their

Successors the keys of our hearts; and it is both our duty and our happiness to place them at their feet. Man's greatest and almost invincible enemy is pride. Confession, by conquering pride, shows itself the great miracle of humanity. The opposition which the great majority of mankind exhibit to this Sacrament demonstrates its necessity. Confession does violence to nature, and is the narrow gate which leads to salvation.

“But why should I fall down,” you ask, “at the feet of another—a sinner like myself, equally wretched, and equally in need of forgiveness?” I reply, that the very fact of his being a sinner enables your humility to triumph in the midst of its humiliations; the very fact of his wretchedness enables him to deal compassionately with your sorrows; and the very circumstance of his needing forgiveness himself enables him to discharge his ministry more efficiently, since, in return for judging others kindly, he shall himself be the more kindly judged. Christian soul, entreat earnestly of God, that He will guide you in the choice of a director, who may lead you to Him; God will hear your prayer, and will discover to you the very person you need.

§ 3.

Examination of Conscience.

I clearly perceive that, without the help of God, it is vain for me to think of sounding the depths of my conscience. He retains in remembrance all my offences, from the greatest to the least. He knew them long before the first thought of committing them rose in my mind. I will beseech him, then, to vouchsafe me some portion from the treasures of His memory. I will beg of Him to recall to my mind all the evil I have committed, and all the good I have left undone.

Lord, have pity on me. I have sinned, not only in the commission of my sins, but also in my forgetfulness of them; and, in order to correct them, I must needs stir up their afflicting remembrance. O God of mercy! make known to me all my enemies, so that I may learn how to conquer them. Place before mine eyes the spotless mirror of my Saviour's holiness. There shall I behold the deformity, the blackness, the infamy, the corruption of my heart. While I contemplate therein the virtues of my Redeemer, I shall behold at the same time my own iniquities. While I admire the wonders of His humility, I shall mourn over the marvels of my own pride: and while

I mark the expiring sigh of my God dying upon a cross, I shall bewail my own inordinate love of the pleasures and honours of the world, and of the vanities of time. O thou Light eternal! grant that one ray of that wisdom, which once dictated the law to Moses, may shine in my soul, and exhibit to me my innumerable transgressions against Thy adorable commandments.

§ 4.

The Soul, after Self-examination, touched with a sincere Repentance.

What a multitude of sins I discover within the recesses of my conscience, O my God! They multiply themselves before me in a frightful manner. The more I examine myself, the more guilty do I appear. But to feel the weight of those offences, which obstruct my approach to Thee, O my Saviour! is a first step in my return unto Thee. That I should be able to see myself, and to detest myself, is a proof that thy grace is already working within me. O Sun of Justice! pour down upon me thy illuminating rays. Shine upon my sins, until thy blaze utterly consumes them. Give me those tears of repen-

tance which solace a broken spirit. Cause them to flow without ceasing. I long to soften the hardness of my heart with repentant streams. Ye penitents of every age, reveal to me the secret of your tears, and instruct me in your humility. Could I but once comprehend, O Lord ! that happiness which thy Saints experience in thy service, I should then feel more sensibly the misery of having abandoned Thee. Could I but realize to myself more vividly the holiness of my God, I should burn with a more ardent desire to please Him, and should be more profoundly ashamed at the sight of those offences which separate me from Him. Reveal to me, then, O Lord ! something of that felicity which overflows the hearts of thy chosen ; and suffer me, O adorable Master ! to behold one single ray of thy Divine countenance, and to be transported with love and admiration at the sight of thy beauty. Grant also that, by contemplating the illustrious examples of the Saints, thy beloved ones, I may receive some salutary and enlivening impressions of thy mercy. This is the school at which we learn the important truth, that a life of humility, of retirement, of obscurity, and of penance, is the way to heaven. Oh ! may all that I read concerning them bear fruit in my heart. Speak, then, Lord, unto my soul ; soften her, restore her ;

“speak but the word, and she shall be healed.”

§ 5.

On entering Church for the Purpose of Confession.

I am now in thy house, O my God ! Everything here announces to me thy presence. These pictures, these sacred ornaments, this Altar, all remind me of the temple in which Thou dwellest. The very air I breathe bears into the depth of my being the impression of thy Divinity. The sight of the faithful engaged in prayer presents to my thoughts that invisible Being, whom they are invoking. The silence that reigns in this sacred place makes thy voice more audible. All remembrance of the world vanishes from my heart, and I seem to myself to stand upon the confines of earth and heaven, only a short distance from thy throne. Assist my mind to realize to itself that the tribunal of Penance is indeed occupied by God Himself ; that it is Thou who art there waiting for me ; that Thou art come there to receive the acknowledgment of my offences, and to instruct me in the way of repentance and salvation. With what sentiments of reverence and hu-

military ought I not to be filled at the thought, that Thou Thyself, O my God ! art close by me in the person of thy priest ; ready to judge and to teach me ! that Thou, the God that hidest Thyself,—the Saviour of Israel,—the King of Justice,—on whom the Spirit of the Lord rests—who healest the broken-hearted, and preachest liberty to the captives ; Thou the Redeemer of the world, the worker of innumerable miracles, the Son of God, the eternal Word, art seated in this very temple, whither Thou hast come to receive the confession of sinners, through the ears of thy minister.

Could I now see Thee with my bodily eyes, in what manner should I approach Thee ? what kind of emotions would fill my heart ? and what should I say as I fell prostrate before Thee, the God of mercy, clothed in our humanity ? Let me consider that the feelings which I should in this case experience, are precisely those which ought to possess the penitent whenever he approaches the sacred tribunal. God hears me ; God sees me. His Spirit encompasses me about. The Lamb without spot stands here ready to judge me, before uniting Himself to me. Lord, by the merits of thy Divine blood, infuse a genuine contrition into my heart. Impart thy strength to my weak resolutions. Soften

my hard heart. Draw forth the living water from this dry rock, and bear the lost sheep back to its fold. I beseech Thee, give me strength to fulfil the promise which I now make Thee at the foot of thy holy Altar, that I will labour to expiate my past offences, to overcome the passions and vices which enthrall me, to conquer my pride by humility, my love of pleasure by penance, and my love of the world by that faith which overcomes the world.

§ 6.

Encouragement.

I have sinned; yes, I have sinned. These words comprise, O my God! the epitome of my entire life. What a confession is this! And, alas! it is only too true; yet, notwithstanding, I implore thy compassion afresh. Take courage, my soul. Lay aside thy restlessness, thy disquietude, thy distrust. The greater thy sins have been, the greater is thy claim, if truly repentant, upon the pity of thy good and merciful Father, and let this thought be thy comfort. Let love and confidence embolden me and lead me on. I am about to approach the sacred tribunal,

where, by the instrumentality of thy Priest, Thou, O Lord ! wilt pronounce over me words of forgiveness, absolution, and peace. Oh, that I may feel some portion of that lively, profound, and loving sorrow, which Thou Thyself didst feel in the garden of Olives. This is what I desire,—this is what I implore with all the earnestness I am capable of. O heart of Jesus, pierced with grief at the sight of my offences ! crush thou my own heart by a lively repentance,—a repentance which shall confirm me for ever in a detestation of sin, and a love of virtue.

§ 7.

Just before Confession.

O my God ! bring to my remembrance the shortness of my life ; say unto me, “ It is in my power to call thee away to-morrow ; a good confession alone can save thee.” On one side I behold Hell, where the lost bewail through eternity their irreparable waste of time : on the other side I behold Heaven, where the Saints rejoice in bliss unspeakable, transported with happiness in the thought that they realized to themselves, while on earth, the true end of their existence. Oh, let

me humble myself; let me mourn over my faults; let me drown in tears of repentance those sins, which must otherwise enthrall my soul, and hinder at the hour of death her aspirations towards the eternal tabernacles. Holy Mary! ye Angels of heaven! ye saints of God! pray for me.

§ 8.

After Confession.

How buoyant my heart feels! All things appear in a new light. I breathe more freely. A secret joy has entered the depths of my soul, in the place of a gloomy melancholy; and I taste that peace which always accompanies the presence of the Holy Ghost. I gaze with confidence at yon venerable Altar; "I love, O Lord! the beauty of Thy house, and the place where Thy glory dwelleth." No longer am I a stranger in this temple. I feel that I again form a part of the family of thy beloved ones, as having been admitted into it afresh by the grace of reconciliation. I see the holy light of the Sanctuary shining before me,—that sacred star which leads to Thee, O Lord! Oh, guide my steps to the place where I may adore Thee; but suffer me first

to bend my knees before the Divine Babe clasped in His Virgin Mother's embrace.

Blessed Baptist! sound in my ears those startling words which once shook the desert of Judea: "Do penance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." I but lately belonged to that "generation of vipers" which thou didst call "accursed;" but I have learned to "fly from the wrath to come." Henceforth I will endeavour to "bring forth fruit worthy of penance," lest I be reckoned among those trees "at whose root the axe is laid," and which, "not yielding good fruit, shall be cut down, and cast into the fire." Lord, grant me to be of that "wheat which Thou wilt gather into thy barn;" Thou, "whose fan is in Thy hand, and who will thoroughly cleanse Thy floor." Let me not "burn as the chaff in unquenchable fire." I long to "fulfil all justice;" and to hear that voice from Heaven which, when the Divine Dove descended upon Jesus, said, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

From this day, I desire to "live upon every word that proceedeth from the mouth of God." I desire to fly from Satan, to "adore the Lord my God, and to serve Him only." "I was sitting in the region of the shadow of death; but I saw a great light, and the light arose upon me."

Henceforth I will labour to conform my life to the sacred precepts of my Redeemer. I will detach myself from earthly goods; I will enter into the true spirit of poverty; I will practise humility and meekness; I will shed tears of repentance and love; I will hunger and thirst after justice, as I once did after honours and pleasures; mercy shall soften my hardheartedness; I will cleanse my heart till it becomes as a mirror in which I may behold my God; I will shun the tumults of anger, and will walk in the spirit of peace; nothing shall turn me aside from the path of faith; I will suffer, if need be, "persecution for justice sake," and "the evil that men shall speak against me falsely for the sake of Jesus Christ," shall make me "leap for joy," because "my reward shall be very great in heaven."

§ 9.

Act of Thanksgiving.

Adorable Master, how greatly do I love Thee! Thou hast recalled me to Thyself, Thou hast spoken to my heart. Thou wouldest leave me no peace, until, wearied of my misdoings, I bowed my head under thy Divine yoke. So consumed was I with the necessity of loving, that I attached myself to vain

phantoms, to honour, to fashion, to a name, to beauty, to pleasure, to a piece of vile metal, to a thousand vain chimeras, and a deceitful hope of felicity. I ran after these shadows, which unceasingly mocked me. Nothing could satisfy my heart; an infinite void always remained within it. Ah, how true it is, that glory, power, beauty, goodness, belong in their fulness only to Thee, my God, and that things created are unworthy of a soul formed for Thyself. A ship cannot sail upon a brook, and the human heart lies stranded, so long as confined within the limits of terrestrial things. A thirst for greatness and a necessity of loving consume all mankind; and this alone is a proof that man is a creature destined for glory and happiness. Nevertheless, the reflection of a single sunbeam in a raindrop is enough to captivate us; and we think not of lifting our eyes up to the sun itself, the infinite fountain of light. Teach me, Lord, to use the imperfect glimmering of things created, only for the purpose of comprehending better thy perfect brightness. O adorable, eternal, and infinite Being! I thank Thee for at least making me feel how unworthy I am of Thy benefits. Imagination cannot fathom the distance that separates Thee from myself, a miserable sinner; thine infinite mercy alone is capable of filling up the immeasurable

interval, and never could I have lifted myself up to Thee, O Lord! though I were to spend thousands of ages in the attempt, hadst Thou not first descended to me. Thou demandest of me a sincere act of contrition, and lo, already I feel Thee near my heart.

How can I praise Thee worthily, O Lord! Ye heavens and earth, assist me in offering thanksgiving to my God. Ye flowers, lend your perfumes. Ye trees, bend down your tops. Ye mountains, burn like holocausts. Oh! that I could convert the entire Universe into one temple, and fill it with my voice, in order to celebrate the praises of my God and Saviour.

Mary! my most tender Mother, lend me thy heart to love Him with. Ye blessed Angels! give me your fervour. All ye Saints! come to my aid.

O Lord! I unite myself with every creature in Heaven and Earth, exclaiming with them, "Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb! Benediction, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and strength, to our God for ever and ever! Amen."

§ 10.

Another Act of Thanksgiving.

How great is the advantage of betaking one's self to Thee, my Father and my God! With truth they told me that Thou art goodness itself: I have myself experienced it. What a grace hast Thou but now conferred upon me! My place was made ready for me in Hell, and Thou hast re-established me in my title to Heaven. Oh! how good art Thou! What sweet words hast Thou spoken to me! "Fear not, I pardon thee. Enter again into my favour. I am thy salvation." What mercy is this! The instant my heart returns to Thee, Thou appliest to me all the merits which Thou hast acquired for me, by thy shame and sufferings. Thou enrichest me, a poor miserable creature, with thine own infinite wealth. But bethink Thee, my God, art Thou setting a sufficient value on thy graces, when Thou thus lavishest them on a wretched sinner? Art Thou estimating at their due price the merits of thy life and thy death? And after all this, can it be that I should again offend Thee, should endeavour to compound with Thee, should hesitate for

a single instant in offering Thee those sacrifices which Thou requirest? No! rather would I die—rather would I die a thousand times, than ever consent to displease Thee, O generous, O tender, O most good and kind Jesus!

A SHORTER EXERCISE FOR CONFESSION.

BEFORE CONFESSION.

Preparation.

O God, who beholdest the secrets of all hearts ! give me grace to know my sins, and to confess them to Thee with a lively contrition.

Compunction.

Listen now, as in God's presence, to what your conscience discloses to you, inasmuch as it is the divinely appointed means, by which we discern between good and evil. Those who allow themselves to remain in sin, stifle the voice of conscience. Suffer it now to speak aloud, and hearken to its just reproaches, saying with David :

“ I will consider all my years in the bitterness of my heart. Against thee only, O Lord ! have I sinned, and done evil before Thee. I said, I will confess against myself my injustice to the Lord, and Thou hast forgiven the wickedness of my sin.”

The soul should here be humbled in reflecting, that

there are cases in which the remembrance of sin, and the desire to confess it, are accompanied by such lively compunction, and such perfect contrition and charity, that the penitent, in virtue of these dispositions, at once obtains remission of his guilt.

In order to know our sins, we must meditate upon the law of God, recall to mind his commandments, and those of His Holy Church; and examine ourselves under the heads of the seven capital or deadly sins, and on the duties of our state in life.

The guilty Soul terrified, after her Self-Examination, at the Sight of God's Justice.

O Lord! my iniquities are multiplied above the hairs of my head; I am overwhelmed by their weight. How can I sustain the terrible-ness of thy justice! Alas! what is my present state in thy sight! What would become of me, if I were to die at this moment!

The Soul comforted by contemplating God's Mercy, and the Death of Jesus Christ.

O Lord! all is lost, if Thou have not pity on me! But Thou art infinitely good; thy mercies are immeasurable. "Where sin abounded, grace doth much more abound." O Jesus! thy obedience, even to the death of the Cross, has atoned for my disobedience and ingratitude.

The Soul encourages herself to love God, and rather to die than offend Him any more.

O my God! "I have sinned against Heaven

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and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy child." Thy favours touched not my heart; thy kindness and long-suffering softened me not: thy mercy, O Lord all good! did but embolden me to offend Thee. What miserable ingratitude towards so kind a Father! Why did I not die at once, rather than displease Thee? Sooner would I die a thousand times than offend Thee afresh. Can it be, O my Saviour! that I have trampled under foot thy blood, that adorable blood by which I was redeemed; and that I have thus renewed, as it were, thy passion and thy death? Notwithstanding all which, Thou once more extendest thine arms to this unworthy sinner, and regardest me with pity. What goodness is this! I will love Thee, O Lord! all my life. Thou only shalt possess my heart.

*The Soul implores Forgiveness in the Words of
Moses.*

"O Lord God! merciful and gracious, patient and full of compassion, and true, who takest away iniquity, and wickedness, and sin; and no man of himself is innocent before Thee; O Lord! I beseech Thee, that Thou wilt go with me, and take away my iniquity and sin, and possess me."

The Soul resolves to confess her Sins as soon as possible.

“I said, I will confess against myself my iniquities to the Lord.” Yes, I will confess them, my God; I will confess them to him whom Thou hast empowered to remit them—to the priest, thine angel and ambassador, the steward and minister of thy graces, to whom Thou hast said, in the person of thy Apostles, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose sins ye shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins ye shall retain, they are retained.” To him will I go, and confess my sins. No false shame shall hinder me from telling all my weaknesses. I had indeed cause to blush while offending Thee, but there is no cause for shame in humbling myself for my offences. I will obey the injunctions of thy minister, and the holy discipline of thy Church. Whether he remit my sins, or whether he judge it more for my good to retain them, I will in either case humbly accept the salutary penance he shall give me. Inspire him aright, O Lord! and to me vouchsafe compunction and an obedient spirit.

The penitent now proceeds to confession with humility and submissiveness. He says the *Confiteor*, as far as *mea culpa*, confessing before God, before the Angels, before the Saints in Heaven, and before his father confessor, that he has sinned, and sinned grievously. While pro-

nouncing the words *mea culpa*, he strikes his breast, after the example of the publican, acknowledging himself as the sole author of his sins, and accusing himself alone. Should the priest reprove him, he does not attempt either to excuse himself, or to throw the blame on others, but listens with reverence and submission, feeling that he is being treated with only too great leniency. When the priest gives him his penance, he listens with respectful silence, and with a readiness to obey in every particular ; and when the priest is about to pronounce absolution he animates his soul with renewed fervour to feel a sorrow for her sins, from a love of God, and in the hope of their remission through His mere bounty, and the merits of Jesus Christ applied to her in this sacrament.

On returning from confession, the penitent will retire apart for a while, in order that his soul may enjoy in silence, between herself and her God, the grace of remission which she has just received. He will resolve afresh, by the Divine aid, to die a thousand times rather than fall again into sin ; and will offer his humble thanksgivings to the Almighty, filled with a deep sense of his miseries, and of the infinite mercy which has delivered him from them.

AFTER CONFESSION.

What a change has been wrought in my soul ! I sigh, and my sighs are sweet ; I weep, and find happiness in the tears I shed. O Father of mercies ! what must be thy compassion, to forgive me so many sins ! Blessed be thy holy name. Create, I beseech Thee, a new heart within me—a heart that shall be ever seeking to please Thee and to love Thee. Penetrated with love and grief, it shall then

be my study to keep my past sins continually before my eyes, and to weep over them as long as I live.

Sentiments of Confidence.

My God, thou art the source and centre of all that is good. I adore thy infinite goodness; I unite myself to it; I lean entirely upon it, not so much for the benefits which I receive from it, as for its own sake. I can discover nothing good in myself, not a single action done with that exactness and perfection which Thou demandest. Not in myself, not in my works, but in Thee alone do I trust, O Thou infinite mercy, who, in a single moment, art able to work in me all that is necessary to make me acceptable unto Thee. In this confidence I live, and from this day forward I place in Thy hands my heart, my body, my mind, my spirit, my will, my salvation, my all, desiring of Thee to dispose of them for time and eternity.

O Jesus, Son of the living God, who camest into the world to redeem and save my soul! I interpose thy precious blood, thy most holy death and passion, thy adorable wounds, and, above all, the wound in thy sacred heart, as a shield betwixt the Divine justice and my sins.

Henceforth my comfort and my trust shall be in Thee, O Son of God ! who hast loved me, and hast given Thyself for me, and hast just applied to me the merits of this ineffable gift in the Sacrament of Penance.

Overflowing of a Heart touched with a Sense of God's Goodness.

O Father of mercies, how good art Thou ! Great as is the wickedness of man, it is not so great as thy paternal compassion. Often as I had trodden under foot the adorable Blood of thy Son, Thou hadst treasures of grace and patience still in store for me, a miserable sinner. Thou didst not grow weary of waiting for me, O most merciful God ! O God who shrinkest from punishing over much ! who hesitatest to smite the vessel of clay formed by thy hands. That patience of Thine, which formerly encouraged me in sloth, now softens my heart. Never again will I allow myself to indulge in evil because Thou art good. Never again will I think myself dispensed from loving Thee because of thy great love for me. No, Lord ; the contemplation of thy mercy animates me to a different course. Not for a single instant will I ever again oppose myself to Him who returns me good for evil. Farewell to that word *to-morrow*, so often on the

lips of the cowardly soul, which is ever delaying her conversion. This very day I will begin the good work. Short enough is the time left me for weeping my sins, and for atoning by my ardour in thy service for the years which I have lost. With Saul I exclaim, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?"

Prayer for Christian Courage and Fortitude.

O God, who beholdest the depth of my misery! Thou alone canst heal it. Bestow upon me, I beseech Thee, the gifts of faith, of hope, of charity, and of that Christian courage in which I am so deficient; and grant me grace to keep the eye of my soul continually fixed upon Thee, O Father Almighty! who givest nothing to thy beloved children except for their salvation; and upon Jesus thy Son, our pattern in suffering. Thou didst will that He should die upon the cross in order that we might be saved; and that He should become "a man of sorrows," in order to teach us the benefit of afflictions. Be silent, O self-indulgent nature! at the sight of Jesus overwhelmed with disgrace, and crushed by sufferings. Exalt and inflame my soul, O my God! give me a heart firm against itself, and fearing nothing so much as to displease Thee. Give me a heart alarmed indeed at those eternal pains which separate

the soul from Thee, but not at those sufferings which tend to prepare her for the happiness of possessing Thee in thy kingdom. Thou seest the weakness and misery of thy poor creature. She no longer has any resource in herself. All things have failed her, and better it should be so, if only Thou fail her not; if only she courageously seek in Thee, for all that she despairs of finding in herself.

Petition for a new Heart.

O Lord! create in me a new heart, such a heart as the holy David asked of Thee,—a heart detached from the world and penetrated with thy love; humble in prosperity, patient and submissive under affliction; a heart alive to the impressions of thy grace, and dead to the vain applause of the world and the attractions of sense; in a word, a heart that shall sigh only after Thee, and shall love nothing except for thy sake.

Thou knowest, O my God! the weaknesses and imperfections of my heart. Its susceptibility of affront, its fastidiousness, its pride, its ignorance, its wanderings, are ever present before Thy sight. Often, too, it is disturbed by feelings, the result of an excessive sensitiveness and of too lively affections. A reed shaken by the wind, a vessel battered by the tempest, are what I may best compare

it to. Ever eager after the world's false glory, ever alive to its own temporal interests, and to the interests of those who are dear to it, it is indifferent only to the gifts of thy grace, and the duties of piety.

Alas! Lord, such a heart as this can never be entirely Thine. It needs a complete change and renewal in order to be capable of belonging to Thee. It needs to become altogether a new heart, quite different from what it has been and from what it still is. And who can change it for me? who can create it anew but Thou, O my God? My reason and my will are unequal to the task of effecting so great a prodigy; but it becomes possible by the assistance of thy grace. Thou perceivest,—Thou fully knowest the extreme misery and weakness of my soul; assist me in its cure. Take possession of this heart, which Thou hast created for Thyself alone. I place it in thy hands. Subdue its sinful inclinations and propensities; correct its faults; reform its habits; in a word, make me a new creature in Christ Jesus, so that my heart, changed and purified by Thee, may be for all eternity the shrine of thy grace and the seat of thy wisdom.

*Psalm cii.***Benedic anima.**

Bless the Lord, O my soul! and all that is within me bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all His benefits.

Who forgiveth all thy sin: and healeth all thine infirmities.

Who redeemeth thy life from destruction: who crowneth thee with mercy and loving kindness.

Who satisfieth thy desire with good things: thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executeth mercies and judgment for all that suffer wrong.

He hath made His ways known unto Moses: His will to the children of Israel.

The Lord is full of compassion and goodness: long-suffering and plenteous in mercy.

He will not always be angry, neither will He threaten for ever.

He hath not dealt with us according to our sins: nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.

For according to the height of the heaven above the earth, He hath strengthened His mercy towards them that fear Him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us.

As a father hath compassion on his children, so hath the Lord compassion on them that fear Him.

For He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are but dust.

Man's days are as grass; as the flower of the field, so shall he flourish.

For his spirit shall pass away, and he shall not be: and he shall know his place no more.

But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity and unto eternity, upon them that fear Him; and his justice unto children's children.

Even to such as keep His covenant, and are mindful of His commandments to do them.

The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven: and His kingdom shall rule over all

Bless the Lord, all ye His Angels: ye that are mighty in strength, and fulfil His commandments, hearkening to the voice of His word.

Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, ye ministers of His that do His will.

Bless the Lord, all His works, in every place of His dominion: O my soul! bless thou the Lord.

Psalm lxxxiv.

Benedixisti, Domine.

Lord, Thou hast blessed thy Land; Thou hast turned away the captivity of Jacob.

Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, and covered all their sins.

Thou hast softened all their anger; and turned away from thy wrathful indignation.

Convert us, O God our Saviour! and withdraw thine anger from us.

Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever; and wilt thou stretch out thy wrath from generation to generation?

Thou wilt turn, O God! and quicken us; and thy people shall rejoice in Thee.

Shew us thy mercy, O Lord! and grant us thy salvation.

I will hearken to what the Lord God shall speak within me; for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His Saints, and to them that are converted in heart.

Surely His salvation is nigh unto them that fear Him; that glory may dwell in our land.

Mercy and truth have met together; justice and peace have kissed each other: truth has sprung out of the earth; and justice hath looked down from Heaven.

For the Lord will shew loving-kindness; and our land shall yield her fruit.

Justice shall walk before Him, and shall set His steps in the way.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

Communion.

INSTRUCTION ON HOLY COMMUNION, IN A COLLOQUY BETWEEN JESUS CHRIST AND THE SOUL.

Jesus Christ. Before the feast of the Pasch, knowing that My hour was come for passing out of this world to My Father; “as I had loved My own who were in the world, so I loved them unto the end.”

Would you know, My daughter, the greatness of this love? Would you understand the extent of it? Listen.

On the eve of that day upon which the redemption of the human race was accomplished, being seated at table with My disciples, to celebrate, according to the Old Law, the Feast of Israel's deliverance, I said to them, “*With desire I have desired to eat this Pasch with you before I suffer;*” and taking bread, I gave thanks, and brake and gave to them, saying, “*Take ye and eat; this is My body.* Afterwards taking the chalice, I gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, “*Drink ye all of this, for this is the chalice of My blood,—the blood of the New Testament—which shall be shed for you*

and for many, for the remission of sins. This do for a commemoration of Me."

Thus was instituted the perpetual Sacrifice, which, consummated upon Calvary, is renewed unceasingly, in an unbloody manner, over all parts of the earth, "from the rising of the sun even to the going down thereof," according to the words of the Prophet Malachias. This Sacrifice is no less real than that of the Cross itself; inasmuch as it is the actual continuation of it; and because the same Victim—"the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world"—is present now upon every altar, and there intercedes for man, even the same that offered Himself for us upon Calvary. Neither is this all. In the ancient Pasch, the people fed upon the typical lamb; and in a similar manner, in order to render My disciples sharers in the Sacrifice of the New Law, by their eating the victim offered for them, I willed in My mercy, to give them My flesh and My blood for food. "I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever; and the bread that I will give is My flesh, for the life of the world. Amen, amen, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye shall not have life in you. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up in the last day: for My flesh is meat indeed, and My

blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me, and I in him."

Soul. I am lost, O Lord ! in contemplating the wonders of Thy power, and of Thy love, which infinitely transcend my understanding. But Thou hast spoken; what more do I need? I will not say, O my Jesus! with the unbelieving Jews, "This saying is hard, and who can hear it?" Reason, it is true, comprehends it not; but faith submits to it; the heart hears and rejoices at it. Through this divine obscurity, in the depths of which inquisitive reason loses itself, the heart discovers a soft light which penetrates it interiorly, and convinces it without effort. I believe with all my heart, O Jesus! Yes; I believe, as Thy Saints have ever believed, and what Thy Church believes; neither can I possibly believe otherwise; for to doubt the incomprehensible prodigies of Thy love, were to doubt Thy love itself.

Jesus Christ. In the pride of their gross and earthly thoughts, those murmurers said:—"How can He give us His flesh to eat?" and because they comprehended not My words, they went back, and walked no more with Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Feeble capacities! they forgot that God can effect infinitely more than man can comprehend; and their mind feeding on vanity, mistook its own narrow conceptions for the law

of the Eternal ! Such, too, are the unbelievers of these days : “ Clouds without water, which are carried about by winds, to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever ! ” For yourself, however, My daughter, stand firm, and hold fast the traditions which you have received from My Church, whether by word of mouth, or by the Holy Scriptures.

Know, then, that as at My first coming into this world I concealed My Divinity under the veil of human nature, so, too, I now conceal My Humanity itself under the appearances of bread and wine, which are signs of the invisible food that nourishes the soul in the holy Eucharist. It remains for man, silencing the objections of sense, to unite himself to My Sacrifice—by the sacrifice of Faith ; and to annihilate the pride of human reason, in order that he may ascend to the Word ; even as the Word emptied Himself, that He might descend to man.

Soul. How sincerely I pity those, O Lord ! who, by refusing to believe in Thy love, and in Thy power, disown Thee in that Sacrament, wherein Thou hast, so to say, exhausted Thyself for them. But still more do I pity those who, while they believe in the infinite gift of Thy very Self, which Thou vouchsafest to them therein, throw contempt upon it, by keeping away from that Divine banquet to which Thou invitest the faithful. Oh, that I

could present myself there every day! Oh, that I could daily receive Thee, O my God! My heart is athirst for Thee: "it thirsts for the living God, for the God of my strength."

Jesus Christ. I made myself a Sacrifice for thee, My daughter; and as "often as ye shall eat this Bread and drink this Chalice, ye shall shew forth My death until I come." Holy Communion, viewed in its relation to man, constitutes, in a manner, the complement of that Sacrifice by which he has been redeemed. In communion, the recipient becomes incorporated with the holy Victim, and as it were one with Him; and here it is that the fruit of My Passion is applied to man, in the most intimate and admirable manner that can be conceived. Penetrated not only with My graces, but with My very Substance, I transform him into Myself: I make Myself, so to say, Incarnate again within him; his soul, united to Mine, is nourished upon love, truth, and light, by feeding on the Divine word, the incorruptible food of Angels: his very body becomes a true temple of the Divinity, whose fulness dwells within Me corporeally; and in receiving My life-giving Flesh, he receives the germ of a blessed immortality. Then it is, My daughter, that opening the treasure-house of My graces, I am pleased to diffuse their inexhaustible abundance through the heart that truly loves Me; I strengthen it

against temptations; I detach it from the things of earth, and teach it to desire and relish only the things of heaven; I enlighten it; I console it; I tranquillize it; and shed upon it a divine mysterious unction, the sweetness of which it is not in the power of words to express.

But, in order to merit these graces, in order to enjoy these favours, it is necessary to approach the Holy Table clothed in the marriage garment, that is to say, with a conscience cleansed of all its stains. Woe be to him who profanes the Sacrament of My love. "Who-soever shall eat this Bread, or drink the Chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and of the Blood of the Lord. But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of that Bread and drink of that Chalice; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the Body of the Lord."

Soul. Who then can be sufficiently pure, O Jesus! to receive within him this great gift, to receive the Most Holy One, whom the very Angels adore with trembling? Who shall dare to approach Thine Altar, after the terrible anathema pronounced by Thee against those who eat and drink unworthily; inasmuch as there is no one upon earth who, after examining his conscience, will not feel himself constrained to say, "Lord, I am not worthy?"

Jesus Christ. Assuredly, My daughter, it would be a frightful presumption for any person, to decide for himself upon his fitness to receive My Body and Blood; and therefore it is that I have appointed, in the Tribunal of Penance, a judge, whom the faithful are bound to obey with all reverence and humility. And here thou seest how necessary Confession is, in order to purify the soul, by restoring to her that robe of innocence which she has lost, and without which no one can sit down at My Feast, and escape the guilt of sacrilege. For in confession, not only is the repentant sinner justified; but also the just man who has preserved My grace draws from thence an increase of holiness, and is prepared to approach My holy Table oftener, and with redoubled confidence.

Soul. O admirable wisdom and transporting goodness of my God! Pride is put down. Nothing is left to man for self-exaltation; yet, notwithstanding, in the midst of his poverty, his wretchedness, his nothingness, it is in his power, it is even his duty, to aspire after a gift, a blessing, an honour, so exalted, so divine, as to excite the holy envy of the celestial Spirits!

Jesus Christ. You say right, My daughter. It is by humbling himself, by prostrating himself in the dust, by exclaiming over and over

again from the bottom of his heart, "Lord, I am not worthy;" yes, in this way it is, that man prepares himself to become a worthy partaker of My Table. But this is not enough: he must add, "with desire I have desired to eat this Pasch;" he must ardently long to unite himself to Me, and to live on Me, renouncing the world, and all that is of the world. He must embrace My Cross with a love resembling My own: he must endeavour to feel as I have felt.

Soul. "As the hart panteth after the fountains of waters, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God!" Do Thou Thyself create in me those dispositions which Thou requirest. Give unto me, in order that I may give unto Thee. What else has this poor heart to offer Thee, but Thine own gifts? O Jesus! sever me from everything that is not Thee. Break asunder the last links that hold me chained to earthly objects; so that from henceforth I may not only be united to Thee, but may be one with Thee, and may be able to exclaim with Thy Apostle, "With Christ I am nailed to the Cross, and I live; now not I, but Christ liveth in me. And that I live now in the flesh, I live in the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself for me."

Jesus Christ. When the soul is thus prepared—when, to express her feelings, she can

find no words more appropriate than those of the sacred Canticle, "Draw me, O my Well-Beloved! we will run after Thee to the odour of Thy ointments: a bundle of myrrh is my Beloved to me; a cluster of cyprus my Love is to me, in the vineyards of Engaddi: I sate down under His shadow, whom I desired: Stay me up with flowers, compass me about with apples, because I languish with love!"—Then it is that, touched by her transports, I call to her in My turn, as the Bridegroom calls the Bride, "Arise, make haste, My love, My dove, My beautiful one, and come. For winter is now past; the rain is over and gone." That period during which sin separated thee from Me, during which My Divine flame warmed thee not,—that period of pain and lamentation is past. "The flowers have appeared in our land;" I have restored thee peace of heart and the joy of my presence. "The time of pruning is come; the voice of the turtle is heard in our land; the fig tree hath put forth her green figs; the vines in flower yield their sweet smell;" all is ready for our union, "Arise, My love, My beautiful one, and come."

Soul. Yes, I will arise, Lord; and will come to Thee, since Thou hast said unto me, "*Come.*" Behold, I am here at the foot of Thine Altar. I have received, I possess, the

celestial Spouse. "I have found Him whom my soul loveth. I have laid hold of Him, and will not let Him go. My Beloved is mine, and I am His. I have set Him as a seal upon my heart." Oh that He may remain there for ever! All things else are nought to me but weariness, sorrow, and vexation of spirit. I desire only my Well-Beloved; I desire nothing but Him from this time forward, till the day of eternity dawns upon me, and the shadows of mortality fade away.

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Jesus Christ. Now that you have tasted for a while in silence, My daughter, the pure delights that flow from possessing Me; now that you have wholly abandoned yourself to Me in an ecstasy of holy joy,—awake from this sweet languor, and hearken to what I shall say to you interiorly, for I will speak unto you words of peace; I will shew you the path of wisdom, and the blessed land to which it leads; I will animate you in my service; I will make known to you those imperfections of yours which still excite My displeasure, and will teach you how to amend them; I will strengthen you with My counsels, and will inspire you with energetic resolves. My light shall penetrate your mind: My grace

shall stir your heart. It shall open itself to Me, and show Me all its secrets. You shall exhibit to Me, with sincerity, all your wants, all your temptations, all your weaknesses, all the evil propensities which you have such difficulty in overcoming. You shall tell Me everything. You shall conceal nothing from Me, but shall speak to Me as a man speaks to his dearest and most devoted friend. Confidence is unbounded where affection has no limit; and, moreover, what can you tell Me that I do not know already? But it is My will to hear what you have to say, from your own lips: it is My will that your heart should overflow into Mine. Have you afflictions? confide them to Him who comforts and consoles. You must needs suffer; you must needs enter through many tribulations into the kingdom of God; but I will temper your sufferings to you, I will sweeten your trials, I will assist you in carrying your cross.

Soul. Who could believe, Lord, that Thou condescendest to invite Thy poor creature to converse familiarly with Thee? to unveil to Thee her miseries, her infirmities, and her wounds? I will obey, O my Jesus! since Thy love so ordains it. I will lay bare my heart to Thee. Alas! what a sad spectacle it exhibits to Thine eyes! Levity, fickleness, pride, and a craving for the pleasures of sense

—these are the dispositions which I find in myself. Destroy, O Lord! these seeds of death. Strengthen my will; make me, after Thine own pattern, meek and humble of heart, pure, chaste, faithful to my duties, patient under contradiction, and resolute in Thy service. Increase my faith, and suffer me not to be so ungrateful, so cowardly, as to be on any occasion ashamed of it. May a firm hope in Thy promises support me amid the trials of the world. Preserve me, Lord, from its snares. Keep watch, O Jesus! over Thy poor child, and especially in my last hour; so that, having lived in Thy grace, I may die in Thy love.

Jesus Christ. “If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; as I also have kept My Father’s commandments, and do abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and your joy may be full. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. Ye shall lament and weep; but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be made sorrowful; but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman, when she is in labour, hath sorrow, because her hour is come; but when she hath brought forth the child, she remembers no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. So also ye now, indeed, have sorrow; but I will see

you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man shall take from you."

Soul. O Jesus! O my Well-Beloved! how sweet are Thy words! They descend into the depth of my heart, "like the precious ointment, which ran down to the skirt of Aaron's garment." Yet, nevertheless, they warn me that there are still tears to be shed; and recall me to the miseries of my banishment, even as upon Mount Tabor, in the midst of the glories which surrounded Thèe, Thou spakest of Thy Passion, with Moses and Elias.

Jesus Christ. Endeavour to enter, My daughter, into the thoughts which then engaged Me. Whom hast thou within thee? Thy God crucified. Contemplate those pierced hands and feet; that opened side; that body so torn and bruised; that head crowned with thorns. To what end were so many wounds, so many sufferings? To atone for your sins; to obtain for you a heavenly kingdom. "The Lamb of God," "the Lamb that was slain," "that taketh away the sins of the world," has become your food. You have eaten His Flesh and drunk His Blood. You have received the sacred Victim within you. I have given Myself unto you whole and entire, in order that you may have life; for "he that cometh to Me shall not hunger, and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst," but shall have life

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within him; shall live for ever. Again, I say unto thee, contemplate the Son of God in His abasement, in His agony, in His death. "Surely I have borne thine infirmities, and carried thy sorrows; despised, derided, and the most abject of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief;—I was wounded for thy iniquities, and bruised for thy sins." Offer, then, thyself with Me to the justice of My Father; and, "filling up in thyself those things that are wanting of My sufferings," accept the trials which may be sent thee, as a portion of My Passion.

Soul. What can I say unto Thee, O my Jesus! save, in the words of Thy Apostle, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him?" Behold me, Lord, in Thy Presence; I am ready. Make me Thy victim, even as Thou Thyself wast made mine; and if I cannot shed my blood, and give my life for Thee, I wish at least to die to everything that displeases Thee;—to sin; to all earthly and sensual desires; to the world; and to myself. I accept, without reserve, all the trials and afflictions which Thy love has in store for me;—contempt, calumnies, affronts, injustice, persecutions, and whatever else; regarding them as the inheritance of Thy servants here below, and as the most precious of Thy gifts, inasmuch as they make us to resemble our Divine Mas-

ter. O Cross of my Saviour! O Cross most holy! O true treasure of the Christian soul! I desire thee; I long for thee; for in thee, and thee only, is our strength, our hope, and our consolation, through the sorrowful days of our pilgrimage. Thou art the Tree of Life, whose fruit confers immortality. Thou art the mystic Ladder of Jacob, whose top is lost in heaven. Thou art the sacred Altar, upon which we must, each in turn, consummate the sacrifice of himself. On this Altar, still bathed with Thy blood, O Jesus! I extend myself. Here, I unite my sorrows to Thy sorrows; here, I blend my agonies with Thine; here, too, I await that last blow, which, freeing me from the fetters of the body, shall put me for ever in possession of Him whom alone my soul loveth. Then at last shall be lifted up the veil which now conceals Him from my view. Then shall I behold Him face to face, as He is. "O fairest of the children of men!" my Redeemer! my God! "I shall be satisfied, when Thy glory shall appear."

Jesus Christ. Yes, My daughter, a day will come, when, provided thou art faithful, thou "shalt know Me even as thou art known of Me." At present, although I am as really within thee as in Heaven itself, thou canst but discover Me by faith; and my presence

is only made sensible, by the unction which I diffuse invisibly within the heart. In no other manner is it possible for thee to enjoy Me here below. But when "God, who is a Spirit," shall have "transformed thee into His own image," thou shalt mount from light to light, up to the very source of all beauty, of all light, and of all excellence.

Soul. How I long, O Lord! to behold that day which Thou promisest me; that day which never sets; that day of joy and eternal blessedness, which already shines upon Thy Saints in the heavenly Jerusalem! Until then, my only joy, my sole consolation is to possess Thee, O Jesus! in the Sacrament of Thy love. Wherefore, I give Thee thanks for having vouchsafed to come unto me, and to dwell in the house of this poor sinner. The more I reflect upon Thy immeasurable goodness and Thine infinite mercy, the more I feel my inability to thank Thee and love Thee as thou deservest. I beseech Thee, then, inspire my heart and lips with those sentiments and words of which I stand in need; and crown all Thy gifts, by teaching me how to thank the Giver.

Jesus Christ. All praise, all language, My daughter, fails, and comes to nought in My Presence. Thou canst but use those words of the royal Prophet, "My soul fainteth for the

courts of the Lord." But if thy tongue be silent, let thy works speak in its stead. Turn to good account the abundant graces which thou hast received in holy Communion. Like Mary, "keep" all My words, "pondering them in thy heart." "The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life." Begin a new life, a life disengaged from the senses: a life holy and perfect, such as should be that of "true adorers, who adore the Father in spirit and in truth." "The flesh lusteth against the spirit;" chastise the flesh, and bring it into subjection. Let all your desires mount up towards Me; and never suffer your eyes to take delight in resting upon the earth. What can you gain from this world? Thou hast "not here a lasting city, but thou seekest one that is to come," the City of Peace, where My Elect share with Me My eternal kingdom. Shun corrupting pleasures; fight against pride, the father of lies, of envy, and of dissension. Let charity without bounds imbue thee with a spirit at once of zeal and meekness. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so ye shall fulfil My law." Be patient, compassionate, ready to help others, humble, and ever contented to be the lowest among thy brethren. "For if any man thinketh himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." Glory, then, "in nothing save in the Cross of

Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to thee, and thou to the world."

Such, My daughter, are the fruits which you ought to reap from Communion; and it is by this means that you will best prepare yourself to sit down again to My Holy Table. The Heavenly Food which you there receive will augment your strength, and assist you to advance in all virtue. It is your true nourishment during your pilgrimage upon earth, as it will be your Viaticum when you are about to depart hence. Then also I will be near thee. "I will not leave thee comfortless." In the last struggle, when "thy heart shall be sorrowful even unto death," I myself will come to support thee and console thee.

Soul. Be present with me, O Lord! at that dread passage, at that decisive hour, which will fix my lot for ever. Forsake me not, when all others shall have abandoned me, and when I shall be fast sinking into the night of the grave. It is written, "Weep not for him that is dead, because he is at rest;" and again, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord." Death, then, is not an evil in itself; neither is it death that I so much fear, my God, but rather thy judgment after death. When, on the one hand, I reflect upon my sins, my heart trembles; when, on the other, I consider that here below I am separated from the object

of my love, then, with St. Paul, I feel wearied of my life, and long for the dissolution of my body, so that I may be reunited with my Saviour.

Jesus Christ. This is a holy desire, My daughter, and so, too, the fear which moderates it is useful and wholesome. Submit yourself to My will, whether I may choose to call you soon to Myself, or whether it be My good pleasure to try you still further. Watch; keep yourself in readiness; for "the day of the Lord shall so come as a thief in the night;" that is to say, when least expected. Woe be to those whom it shall surprise; to sinners, at ease in the midst of their sins, trusting in their youth, and reckoning upon length of days. "At the very moment when they shall say '*Peace and security,*' then shall sudden destruction come upon them, and they shall not escape."

The practice of frequently receiving the holy Sacrament of the Eucharist is at once a most certain safeguard of purity of life, and the best preparation for death. "The prince of this world, who has nothing in Me," in like manner has nothing "in those who are one with Me," and in whom I make My abode. Happy they who receive Me! and who, in possessing Me, have no desire left but that of receiving Me again; a desire which, growing

unceasingly, unceasingly likewise augments their horror for sin, which alone can separate them from Me. While the children of this world drag with pain to the grave a long chain of deceived hopes and ruined expectations, they, whose whole life is in Heaven, are neither seduced by earthly goods, nor disturbed by what the world pronounces to be evils. Their heart is elsewhere; and this is the reason why they journey in peace through the valley of tears, guided by My light, which shews them in the distance their true country, the city of happiness and joy. And when sometimes nature, exhausted, faints within them; when they seem for a moment to be sinking under their fatigues, and say to Me, "Grant me a little rest before I go hence and be no more seen"—then it is that I seat Myself near, inviting them to repose on My bosom, as did the well-beloved disciple at My last Supper; and this repose is to them the image, and, as it were, the sacred first-fruits, of that eternal rest which awaits them in Heaven.

Soul. Oh, the love of my God! All that is within me cries unto Thee, O Lord! "And the Spirit and the Bride say Come! and he that heareth, let him say, Come!"

Jesus Christ. Surely I come quickly.

Soul. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus! come!

ANOTHER INSTRUCTION ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

JESUS CHRIST gives Himself to us in Holy Communion. The institution of this divine Sacrament is a miracle of love, which demands all ours in return. Who are we, that we should speak worthily of a mystery, the sacredness of which is so far above all expression, that it belongs only to the Seraphim, burning with love, to speak of it!

Yes! beyond a doubt, the Holy Eucharist is love. It gives to our saddest days a sweet serenity: its charms never weary; it presents to our hearts the sweetest and strongest attractions; it is our Paradise on earth, our joy, our sole life. Let us feel profoundly our happiness in possessing it; and let it be our regret, that we have but a single tongue to celebrate its praises, as we have but a single heart wherewith to appreciate it.

How sweet it is to possess a lively faith in the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the holy Sacrament! There is no happiness here below comparable with *this*. How much are those to be pitied who, seduced by their passions, dare to oppose this august Sacrament of Christ's love, and to doubt His goodness and omnipotence! As if He, who with a

single word created the universe out of nothing, had not power also to change one substance into another! As if He, who through love died for us in the midst of the most painful agonies, were unable to perpetuate at His good pleasure the sublime sacrifice of His love! How much, I repeat, are those unbelievers to be pitied for their ignorance of Christ's power, and of the marvellous excess of His Divine charity!

Oh, to think of the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar, what tender delight it creates in the soul! How is it possible to reflect on this mystery of Divine love, without our hearts being wholly set on fire, and transported with gratitude and joy. O inconceivable prodigy! O miracle of love, exhibited by our Saviour in the holy Eucharist! To love beyond the grave! To love to the consummation of ages! To love for the sole happiness of the object beloved! To love so much, as to become dependent in a manner on the being whom He created! To love in spite of a thousand outrages! To love to such an excess as to give Himself for Food to His beloved, to annihilate Himself, to multiply Himself, to reproduce Himself moment by moment; to give Himself with the same love, with the same tenderness, to the poorest as to the most exalted of His creatures! What immeasur-

able love is here! Who can love thus but God only?

True it is, that in the most Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ conceals His Divine gift from the perception of our bodily senses. That majesty, that glory, that magnificence, which transport the Blessed; that beauty, splendour, light, and combination of ineffable perfections, which constitute the eternal love and felicity of the Angels,—all these are hidden from our view. But faith is given us to supply the feebleness of sense; and by faith the Christian, elevated above himself, enjoys, in some sort, the prerogatives of an angelic nature. Faith pierces for him the obscurity of the Divine mysteries; and, penetrating the sanctuary of Deity itself, lifts up that veil which she alone has a right to touch. Yes, had we faith, we should be as much transported at the sight of the august Sacrament upon our altars, as if Christ Himself, with all His glory, were made visible to our senses.

Here let us pause, and endeavour to impress on our minds a few sovereign truths, the consideration of which is well adapted to prepare us for worthily receiving the Bread of Angels. Such, for instance, are the following:

Jesus Christ has given His Flesh for the life of the world.

He who eats not the Flesh of Jesus Christ, and drinks not His Blood, has not life in him.

How could we support this miserable exile, if deprived of the happiness which flows from the celestial nourishment contained in the adorable Body of Jesus Christ!

In order to communicate worthily, an essential disposition is purity of soul. At the very least, the soul must be clear from all mortal sin.

Not to be in a fit state to communicate is a great misery; and indifference in acquiring the necessary dispositions is a great sin.

The Bread of Life brings with it a second Death, worse than the first, to those who receive it into a heart over which mortal sin has dominion.

An unworthy Communion is the greatest of all crimes, inasmuch as it renders the soul guilty of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ Himself.

To communicate unworthily is the greatest of miseries, since we thereby eat and drink our own judgment and condemnation.

Although venial sin does not absolutely render a person unworthy to communicate, nevertheless, he who cherishes an affection for slight faults, deprives himself of many graces.

Negligence and lukewarmness constitute another obstacle to the abundant pouring forth of God's gifts.

Alas! there are Communion which, without being positively bad, produce but little fruit. Jesus Christ desires nothing so much as to lavish His graces upon us; but too often the heart into which He descends is ill prepared to receive Him; here, again, we find fresh cause for tears.

Oh, how much it were to be desired, that all who draw near to this mystery could approach it free from venial sins, and all on fire with divine love!

Above all, he who enjoys the blessing of frequent Communion, ought to aim at shewing his gratitude for this unspeakable privilege, by a constant zeal in improving himself in the necessary dispositions.

The whole life of a Christian (observe it well) ought to be an exhibition of his gratitude for the fruit which he has derived from his Communion, be it more or less.

Every fresh Communion should be a preparation for the succeeding one, and a thanksgiving for the former one.

We should study, every time we communicate, to do so as though it were the first or last time in our life.

A salutary effect is to be anticipated from

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our Communion, in proportion to the degree of preparation that we bring to them.

He who feeds upon Jesus Christ in the Holy Sacrament, ought to live for Christ. To live for Christ is to love Him and all that He loves, especially His Cross, that supreme object of His desires; it is to make all our actions centre in Him; to have a zeal for His glory, for His truth, for the interests of His Church, and for the salvation of souls.

In Holy Communion the soul is fed and nourished upon God Himself. What fruits of holiness, then, ought she not to produce!

What sacrifice can there be, which we ought not to be ready to offer God upon that Altar where Jesus Christ is immolated for us, and where He gives Himself to us! The sacrifice of every earthly affection, from the greatest to the least, is but little in comparison. How careful ought we to be, to banish from our heart everything that can possibly displease Him whom we desire to receive within it!

The faithful soul is ever bent on exhibiting, in her conduct, the life of that God whom she has received. Now, the God of the Eucharist is a God humbled and self-annihilated; we ought, then, utterly to renounce all that wretched love of human esteem and false glory, which excites men to

the display of virtues made to please the world, and prompts them to discard those which are opposed to worldly maxims.

The God of the Eucharist is a God of peace and of concord; we ought, therefore, to be diligent in rooting out from our hearts every smallest antipathy, even such as confine themselves entirely to the interior of the breast.

The God of the Eucharist is a God hidden and unknown; let us, then, accustom ourselves to silence and solitude. If detained in the world by the duties of our calling, let us at least withdraw from it by means of holy desires and aspirations. Let us bestow upon it only that amount of time which God forbids us to deny it. Let us quit it by choice; let us return to it only from necessity.

Above all, the God of the Eucharist is a God of purity and of holiness; it becomes us, then, to avoid every species of intercourse with others which, although not positively sinful, tends, nevertheless, to enfeeble the soul; which, even if it does not stir the passions, occupies the heart overmuch; and which, if it does not expose the soul to great sins, is at least an impediment to the acquisition of great virtues.

A desire after perfection is a necessary preparation for frequent Communion; but this

desire cannot be regarded as sincere, unless it extends to the regulation of the conduct and the subjection of the passions.

Art thou one of those fervent souls, who practise counsels of perfection, in order to strengthen themselves in the observance of what is commanded?

Art thou one of those courageous souls, who are in the habit of denying themselves what is permitted, in order to be better on their guard against what is forbidden?

Art thou one of those faithful souls, who are ever alive to the voice of grace, and dead to the charms of the world?

Art thou one of those charitable and peaceable souls, who are easily touched by the sufferings of their brethren, while they readily forget their own; who are edified by the virtues of their neighbour, without being scandalized at his weaknesses?

Art thou one of those humble and modest souls, who set a good example to the world, without seeking its commendations; who know of no virtues so precious and lovely as those of which the world is ignorant; whose sole consolation under their failings consists in the humiliation attendant upon them; and who fear holiness only for the reputation which it brings?

If thou art one of these truly Christian

souls, go and approach the altar. Thy God awaits thee there with all the riches of His love.

On the other hand, art thou one of those distracted souls, who recklessly plunge themselves into the most trivial amusements, into the vortex of frivolous conversation, into the whirl of tumultuous pleasures?

Art thou one of those inquisitive, indiscreet, censorious souls, whose pretended charity simply consists in censuring the least defect in their neighbour, and all their zeal in publishing it abroad?

Art thou one of those souls, whose habit it is to judge ill of their neighbour in proportion as they judge well of themselves; too vain to detect in themselves the smallest defect; too jealous to distinguish in others the least ground for merit?

Art thou one of those souls, whose life is given up to effeminacy and indolence; who are full of affection and conceit, of fickleness and impatience, of self-will and temper; and who at once, by their caprices of judgment and faintness of heart, throw discredit on the devotion to which they so unworthily pretend?

Art thou one of those presumptuous and rash souls, who only esteem as holy what they wish to be so; who recognize neither

wisdom nor truth in any advice except that which flatters their vanity; and whose imaginary virtues are, one and all, engrafted upon the most evident self-love?

Art thou one of those souls, whose religion is exterior, and consists in outward show; who run after what is brilliant in piety, neglecting what is solid; whose devotion is fruitful in complaints and murmurs, in suspicions and jealousies, in satire and slander, in imprudence and curiosity, and in attachment to self, and to those whom it were better not to see, except in order to imbibe a dislike of their faults?

Art thou one of those souls, who live in slavery to habit; whose only reason for communicating is, because they have been accustomed to do so; who never miss Communion on their set days, notwithstanding they may have failed in important duties; and who flatter themselves that they are always the same, always faithful, always fervent, because they have made no change in the number of their Communions?

Art thou one of those souls, who allow themselves to be seduced by a false zeal for imitation; who aspire to the devotional practices of the Saints, without labouring to acquire their virtues and merits; who aim at distinguishing themselves by walking in the

footsteps of highly privileged souls, and who accompany them into the Sanctuary with the view, not of equalling them in fervour, but of sharing their reputation?

Finally, art thou one of those strangely volatile and superficial souls, who appear to regard their Confessions and Communion as constituting the whole sum of their religious duties?

Listen to the voice of the Fathers and Councils, launching their anathemas against this monstrous union of so many Communion with so many defects. Stand in awe, not only of that God who judgessinners, but still more of that God who judges the just themselves. Fear to dishonour His holy religion by a scandal, which is a source of delight and triumph to innumerable reprobate souls;—a scandal, which furnishes malice and error with ready weapons for the discredit and overthrow, among the faithful, of the so needful practice of frequent Communion;—a scandal which produces a multitude of other scandals, the whole weight of which will fall back on thyself, since thou shouldest have foreseen these consequences; and, in order to prevent them, oughtest to have regulated thy conduct in the first instance, and the number of thy Communion afterwards; and to have prepared thy-

self for those graces which are the fruit of the Sacrament, by practising the virtues which dispose us for them.

But who can say what are the sublime effects which our Saviour produces by holy Communion in a pure soul, who loves Him in singleness of heart, and is at pains to follow His precepts? God alone knows. Even the soul herself, in whom these wonders are effected, is, in a great measure, unconscious of them. A soul prepared with the due dispositions receives, in Communion, a favour infinitely surpassing the visions and revelations which have been granted to all the Saints together. And, after all this, how comes it to pass that we are so little moved by this adorable Sacrament; that we can find it in our hearts to love anything on earth besides it; and that we can bestow our attention and thoughts upon indifferent subjects so much oftener than upon this? Faith reveals to us the wonders contained in the blessed Eucharist; it unceasingly reminds us of the Body, the Blood, the Soul, the Divinity, of Jesus Christ there present: nevertheless we remain almost without feeling in His heavenly Presence; without devotion, without light, without relish; dry, hard, cold, and dull; and, instead of finding in us dispositions favourable to the sublime

operations of His grace, He is disheartened at every moment by our attachment to miserable trifles.

Jesus has said, "Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye shall not have life in you." But (and this cannot be repeated too often), for those who partake frequently of this vivifying Food, it is undoubtedly not sufficient to lead a life exempt from certain gross vices, and, for the rest, filled with a thousand imperfections. Frequent Communion presupposes fervent piety, a strict observance of every smallest duty, and the solid practice of virtue. If we desire to communicate frequently with fruit, we must sanctify our lives, and make them conformable to the frequency of our Communion; that is to say, we must live in retirement of mind and heart, and in separation from what St. John calls the world; because frequent Communion is incompatible with a worldly and dissipated course:—we must unceasingly renew the ardour of our devotion, and give ourselves up, without intermission, to the exercises of a Christian life; because frequent Communion is wholly at variance with habits of spiritual indolence:—we must, as much as possible, keep a guard over our heart, regulate all its emotions, subdue its passions, root out its wayward habits, and banish

everything from it which is not in accordance with God's will, and with the perfection of His holy law; or, at least, there must be in us the desire and the endeavour to do so; because frequent Communion is incompatible with imperfections voluntarily retained, and which we take no pains to remove:—we must be humble, charitable, patient, mortified, and constant in prayer, and in all pious works; or, at least, we must endeavour to become so; because just as all these virtues are commonly the fruit of frequent Communion, so it, in turn, is their requital and reward.

Alas! how comes it to pass that we need a commandment to make us accept of so great a benefit? How comes it to pass that threats should be necessary in order to constrain us to enjoy such a happiness? The fact appears incredible. Yet still more incredible is it, though not less true, that the special command of Christ, and the punishments which He threatens, are not sufficient, in the case of multitudes, to bring them to the Holy Altar with that frequency which the health of their souls requires.

In order that the Eucharistic Bread may produce its due effects within us, in order that It may make a durable impression on the soul, that It may expel from her every impurity, that It may penetrate her with Its own virtues,

and that it may transform her into Jesus Christ; it must needs be her ordinary and regular nourishment. Every time we partake of It duly, we acquire fresh vigour, and develop within our souls a new germ of life. Oh, then, be careful never to estrange yourself from this life-giving Sacrament! Never let your Communion be at long intervals from each other; and reflect often upon the multitude of blessings which you would thus be depriving yourself of; for such is the nature of this adorable mystery, that, while it demands good dispositions, it also tends to perfect them; while it exacts virtues, it augments them; and obliges us to approach with holiness, only in order that it may render us still more holy. One Communion made with devotion is at once a preparation and an incentive to another still more perfect;—a preparation, because of the heavenly gifts which it diffuses in the soul;—an incentive, because of the holy desires which it excites. You complain of not feeling a relish for the Eucharistic Bread; you say that this is your reason for absenting yourself from the Lord's Table. On the contrary, it is your continued absence that produces this distaste. Would you remove it? Go to the heavenly Banquet. There, and there only, will you gain that ardent desire for Communion in which you

are so deficient; and the oftener you receive your God, the more will you long to unite yourself to Him. On the contrary, if you withdraw yourself from Jesus, He will, in turn, withdraw from you. The less frequently you approach His Holy Table, the fainter will become your desire to do so; and the final effect of your estrangement from Holy Communion will be, to extinguish in you every desire to receive it.

Among those who look out for excuses, in order to dispense themselves from the duty of frequent Communion, there are some who say, that they are not, as yet, sufficiently perfect; but how can they ever expect to become so, while they keep away from the centre and source of all perfection? Others say, that their frailties are too numerous to suffer them to come; but that is the very reason why they should have recourse to "the bread of the strong." Others say, that their health will not permit them; rather they should, on this very account, betake themselves to the heavenly Physician. Others say that they are not worthy; but does not the Church put in the mouth of even her holiest children those words, *Domine, non sum dignus*; "Lord, I am not worthy?" Others say, that they are overwhelmed by the anxieties and cares of business; but it is to these that Jesus Himself says,

“Come to Me, all ye that are burdened, and I will refresh you.” Others say, that they are afraid of receiving our Lord to their condemnation; but ought they not rather to fear being condemned for neglecting to receive Him?

Others, finally, there are, who refuse to come on the ground of humility; but is not this humility very often a mere self-deception? It is true, we are all very unworthy to communicate often; but if our unworthiness is a legitimate obstacle to our enjoying this ineffable happiness, then we are bound not merely to approach Jesus Christ seldom, but to give up all hope of receiving Him at all, since it is absolutely impossible that we should be ever really worthy. Alas! God knows too well, that dust out of which we are made; He knows our infirmities, our weaknesses, our miseries. But, while He knows them, He has also compassion on them. Provided our love for Jesus is lively and constant; provided it destroys in us all affection for sin, even for venial sin; provided it animates us with a true zeal in the pursuit of that perfection which belongs to our state in life,—this is all that God requires of us. We shall be sure, in that case, of having those dispositions which are indispensable for frequent Communion—dispositions in conformity with the spirit of the Church, and with the gracious

designs of our Lord. That is but a vain and false humility which does nothing, which engages in nothing, which undertakes nothing, which effects nothing, for fear of becoming more unworthy of Jesus and of His Sacrament; which leaves the sinner ever stationary in the midst of the same imperfections; which neither renders him more fervent, nor more regular, nor more holy; in a word, which has for its only distinctive mark an absence from holy Communion. True humility would exhibit itself in a far different way, namely, by leading the sinner to detach himself resolutely from the world; since, by his own confession, it is the love of the world that renders him unworthy to appear at the Table of the Son of God. But, since he does not act thus, it is only too clear, that he loves the reprobate world more than he loves Jesus Christ; and that his apparent humility is but a veil, under which he flatters his self-love. Let him, then, no longer say, "I abstain from Communion out of reverence;" but rather let him say, as he must inwardly feel, to be the case, "I abstain from it, because I am unwilling to submit myself to the holy laws which religion prescribes to those who approach it; I abstain from it, because my life is spent in dissipation, and my time engrossed by the world and by its pleasures; I abstain from it, because I have not

the courage to dare anything for my salvation; I abstain from it because I cannot resolve to mortify my senses, or to do the least violence to myself; I abstain from it because I choose to live without any rule, and to abandon myself to my own caprices. Alas! how true are those words of St. Ambrose: "Ah, Lord, it is of the adorable Bread of the Eucharist that Thou hast said, *Behold, they that go far from thee shall perish.*"

To pretend that we are working out our salvation, and at the same time to abstain from the sacred Altar,—what else is this but to desire an impossibility; to reckon upon the end without using the necessary means; to expect, in opposition to the word of God Himself, that the kingdom of Heaven, which is only promised to violence and manly virtue, will be indiscriminately granted to sloth and indifference; and to imagine that we may hope to possess God without ever having really loved Him; or that it is possible to love Him sincerely while we make no effort to please Him, to draw nigh to Him, and to unite ourselves to Him, by those Sacraments which are the sources of grace, and reciprocal pledges of love? Alas! how pleasantly the world dreams! But how desolate shall be its awaking! Unhappy votaries of pleasure! would that they but knew Him from whom they estrange

themselves! Oh, that I could give them some adequate idea of all that they abandon! Oh, that I could describe to them all the delights of the Feast of love, and of that rare fragrance which it diffuses within the soul! Oh, that I could shew them those innumerable holy souls, who, in attending the sacred banquet, become entranced with joy; and all on fire with love, cannot help repeating to themselves without ceasing, that the happiness which they derive from their Communions is the summit of earthly felicity!

The sweetness of this hidden manna can only be perfectly relished by those who, like the members of religious orders, have hidden themselves from the world; and have learned to abandon all things, in order to obtain the privilege of communicating often, and of conversing in silence and in secret with Him whom they love. Who can depict the happiness of having it in our power to receive, all but daily, that living Bread which came down from Heaven, and contains within it the sweetness of Heaven itself; that celestial aliment, that divine Eucharist, that mystery of love; in a word, the adorable Body of our Lord and our God! The soul which has forsaken the world feeds on Jesus and on hope. Devoted entirely to her God, she blesses the merciful hand which has withdrawn her from the

tabernacles of the ungodly, where all is treachery and deception; where we meet with only false goods and unreal shadows of happiness, which mock mankind and lead them on to most real miseries. Every moment, of which she has the disposal, she spends at the foot of the Altar, like a loving turtle dove, and frequently, after remaining there through the day, she rises while others sleep, and returns to her beloved. . . . The stillness of the night,—the pale rays of the moon gleaming across the church windows,—the image of the holy Virgin, holding in her protecting arms the Divine Infant, who loves, and desires to be loved in turn,—the very shadows of the pillars which surround the Sanctuary—seem to murmur gently in her ear the name of Jesus. There, bent as a drooping lily, her hands crossed on her heart, which beats with pure love and joy, she exclaims in a voice broken by tenderness: “O Sacrament of my God, my life and my love, how sweet it is to be with Thee! How necessary art Thou to my heart! what tender sentiments dost Thou not excite in my soul! God of love! Divine source of my happiness on earth! what sweet repose I taste in Thy Presence! what holy joy! what peace, even in the midst of the grief that I feel for my sins! In Thy Presence the whole universe lies hushed. All things

sink into nothingness. Thou alone, O my Jesus! art my all. Efface from my memory, I beseech Thee, every recollection of the world, its charms and its love. I desire only the love of my God. I desire to retain Him alone in my memory. This Altar brings before me the manger and Calvary. O divine Tabernacle! thou containest within thee all the joy of my soul. O my Jesus! in Thee are all blessings and all love. Mighty Lord, hear and grant this my prayer. Grant that I may die at the foot of Thy tabernacle, inflamed with love, and bathed in my tears." Thus she proceeds, and the fleeting hours, when they bring back the dawn, find her still before the adorable Object, so dear to her heart.

Would we practise frequent Communion, we must, above all things, love God, and serve Him with courage, with constancy, with fidelity. We must strive to acquire humility and every other virtue. We must be ready to suffer all things for Jesus, and for the advancement of His glory. We must be ready to sacrifice everything for Him; and, in turn, we shall find in His love an all-sufficient balm for every evil that we may be called upon to suffer for the sake of His holy Name. He also fully knows our sorrows; His eye beholds them; He will heal them. This is enough for the heart that loves Him. We must likewise

endeavour to feel deeply the infinite blessings which frequent Communion procures us ; and in a word, must ever bear in mind, that as, in order to attain to a holy life, it is necessary to communicate often ; so, in order to communicate often, it is necessary to live holily.

The charms of a spiritual life consist in the delectable unction of the adorable Eucharist. It is, indeed, a forestate of Paradise ; and here below we can form, at best, a very inadequate conception of its excellence, because of the immeasurable disparity which subsists between the corruptible food of man and the incorruptible Bread of Heaven. Alas ! how few are there who take pains to render themselves worthy of relishing this Food of Angels, this flesh of the Lamb without spot ! But those whom Jesus Christ has confirmed in His love ; those who, in order to please Him, have renounced the pleasures of sense and of the world, experience at times in holy Communion the ineffable delights which it contains ;—the Truth, the Love, and the Beauty of God, all turned to the nourishment of God's children. The soul on which our Lord has conferred this grace carries away from Communion an impression of God, which transports her with ecstasy, and which she can neither explain nor comprehend, except after the manner in which St. Paul and the mystical writers speak

of Deity. They describe to us what God is not; they cannot describe what He is. They say, that eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor heart conceived anything resembling Him. They remain transported out of themselves, and, in a manner, lost in the Divine depth; and in this ecstatic state they hear their heavenly Spouse speaking to them things which no language can express. But who is worthy of enjoying this favour? Who but he that has courage to strip himself of all that he has,—all that he is—either in act, or at least in desire, for the love of God alone? Those who retain in their hearts the least attachment, even to the merest trifle, though ready to sacrifice all things else, can never hope to obtain these Divine privileges.

When we return from Communion, it is not, I think, the best mode of thanksgiving, to constrain the mind to a set form of words. We ought, it is true, to represent to our Saviour our miseries and our needs, but not in lengthy petitions. The best of all methods is, to keep ourselves recollected in His Presence. What have we been seeking all along but to possess God? He is now within us. We feel Him in the depth of our hearts. Let us listen in silent adoration to what He will say. Let us wait to receive His graces, His light, His love. Let us give Him our hearts.

Let us pour them out wholly and entirely at His feet, with all the sorrows which perchance are consuming them. Let us offer Him the sacrifice of our entire being. Let us strive to die to all things. Let us hide our life with Christ in God.

Shall we still continue all ice in the midst of the flames of divine love? Jesus, who is love itself, abandons Himself to us in the Eucharist. He who is the Delight of His heavenly Father, makes it His delight to be with the sons of men. They, on the contrary, shun Communion, fear it, defer it from day to day. Know they not, that, deprived of this celestial food, they must inevitably faint and die? They would wish to live for Jesus Christ, without living upon Him. They are close by the fountain of living waters, and, notwithstanding, suffer themselves to die of thirst. They would wish to bear the burden of the law, without enjoying its invigorating influences, which are only to be obtained in Holy Communion. Whereas the truth is, that, in this our pilgrimage, the soul ought to have constant recourse to her Divine food, "lest she fall and faint by the way;" and ought to be always longing for the adorable Jesus. The Eucharist is a Mystery of love. Jesus Christ is there, all burning with love for us. So great is His desire to unite Himself to us, that

infinite as is the glory to which he is exalted in Heaven, there would seem to be still wanting something to His felicity, unless He could also come and dwell in our hearts. Oh, come then, my Divine Jesus; come, O God of my heart, my consolation, my treasure, my happiness, and my life; my God, my joy, my all! Shouldst Thou delay Thy coming, I know not how I shall be able to support Thine absence. I shall die if Thou hasten not to bring me happiness and life. O my God! so long as I live, nourish me continually upon this sacred Bread, that I may gain from It the strength which I need, in order to finish the course which lies before me. And when my last day arrives, then also let It be my support; so that, dying in Thy grace, I may obtain everlasting life. O ineffable Lamb, who alone "takest away the sins of the world!" efface Thou mine by the infinite virtue of Thy Blood. O victim of love! O God of my heart! be Thou my portion for time and for eternity.

I advise you, then, to communicate, and to communicate often. And if worldlings should ask you, why it is that you go to communion so frequently, tell them in reply, that it is in order to learn how to love God; in order to be purified from your imperfections, to be delivered from your miseries, to find

consolation under your afflictions, to overcome the evil propensities of your nature, to gain a complete mastery over yourself, to consecrate yourself more and more to God, and to receive from Him fresh gifts, fresh graces, fresh light. Tell them that two classes of persons ought to communicate frequently,—the perfect, because, having already acquired the right dispositions, they would be greatly to blame did they refuse to draw near to the Fountain of all perfection; and the imperfect, in order that they may attain to perfection;—the strong, for fear of becoming weak, and the weak in order to become strong;—the sick that they may be cured, and the healthy, that they may avoid sickness.—Tell them, that those who have but few engagements ought to communicate often, because they have abundant opportunity; and those who have many, because this is the way to bring down God's blessing on their undertakings, and because those who work hard require frequent and substantial fare.—Tell them, in a word, that you receive the holy Sacrament often in order to learn how to receive it worthily, seeing that few persons perform anything well without constant practice.

May, then, the Holy Eucharist be ever your love, your treasure, your confidence, your strength, your happiness, and your life. May

all your thoughts, all your desires, tend only towards uniting yourself more and more to Jesus Christ. Learn to seek only for Jesus, and to find comfort in nothing apart from Jesus. Breathe nought but Jesus. Let your heart beat and throb for Him alone. Let the days on which you approach not His Holy Table be to you days of mourning and tears; let those on which you enjoy the blessedness of communicating be to you days of delight: and on those happy days on which you have received this adorable Manna, which comprehends within itself all the joys of heaven—on those days of transport, of thankfulness, and of love,—take fresh courage and strength to walk manfully onwards in that path of perfection, of self-renunciation, of self-denial, of self-sacrifice, and of love, which God has been pleased to mark out for you.

To fly from Communion is to fly from life.

The sweetnesses which we taste in Communion are so many steps in advance towards Heaven.

It is through holy Communion that God flows into the soul, to be her light, her strength, and her life.

The evening before Communion our hearts should be all on fire, and the fervour of our desires ought to be such, as to lift us up to Heaven.

First Exercise

FOR COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections.

How can we speak worthily of the greatest and holiest of all our Sacraments, the Sacrament of love,—the ineffable Mystery of Christ's love for us, as displayed in the Eucharist! That our God and Saviour should become, so to say, a spendthrift of Himself; that He should carry His love so far, as even to nourish us on His own adorable Flesh, on His own precious Blood, what a stupendous marvel is this! Where shall we find words to speak of it as it deserves! The subject, it must indeed be confessed, is beyond the capacity of man. Eternity is too short for celebrating its praises. We must be content to say, in the words of holy Scripture, *Venite et videte*, "come and see." Draw near to this

your eternal God, who desires "to make glad your youth." Receive this Chalice, which, in His love, He presents to you. Taste it;—and then refuse, if you can, to exclaim, in a holy transport of joy, "Oh, how sweet is this celestial cup!" *Calix meus inebrians, quam præclarus est!* All the joys of heaven are now centred in my soul. What have I to desire further upon earth! How can I envy even the blessed in heaven! "*Quid mihi est in cælo, et a Te quid volui super terram!*"

Consider the transports which the Saints have experienced in holy Communion. Their spiritual delights equalled the zeal which they brought with them to the Sacrament of love. Read the life of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. You will there see that, during his noviciate, when he was allowed to communicate only on Sundays and Festivals, he made a point of spending the three days preceding Communion, in disposing himself for it by exercises of prayer and mortification; while the three succeeding days were employed by him, in thanksgivings to God for the graces which he had received. Imitate him in this pious practice, and you will soon learn, by your own experience, how many blessings it brings.

In coming to holy Communion, the faithful soul should take the utmost pains to approach Jesus with those dispositions which He re-

quires; for then it is that Jesus, in giving her Himself, gives her not one grace only, but an infinity of graces; and opening to her all His treasures, takes delight in pouring them into her bosom: then it is, that God regards her with an eye of satisfaction and love; increases in her the gifts of faith, hope, and charity; and adds to each of the moral virtues which she possesses, a peculiar grace of its own, an especial unction and energy, which enhances its merit, and admirably facilitates its practice. But it is not every communicant who receives these rare and precious gifts of God's love. Far from it: for the least attachment to one single venial sin, the slightest premeditated offence, uneffaced by humble repentance, is quite sufficient to obstruct our enjoyment of these graces.

The Eucharist repairs the lost strength of the soul, and inspires her with a vigour ever new: it comforts her in her afflictions; it detaches her from creatures; it gives her courage to undertake all things for the love of Him who died for her; and it fills her with consolations, through the presence of Jesus Christ, that "living Bread which came down from heaven," and which comprehends within Itself every pleasant taste. There it is that Jesus discovers to us the excess of His love, and unites Himself to us in the

most tender manner conceivable. There it is that He lavishes upon us His gifts in an ever-increasing abundance, and presents to our lips the Chalice of immortality. There, accordingly, it is that we, in our turn, should endeavour to exhibit towards Him our liveliest affection and gratitude.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

§ 1.

O divine Jesus! I am coming to Thee, because Thou art the best, the truest, and the most sympathizing of friends. It is not enough that, in virtue of faith, hope, and charity, Thy divine gifts, I am already Thine. I aspire to nothing short of the most intimate union betwixt Thy soul and my own. I am, it is true, weak and miserable, ungrateful and rebellious, a sinner by nature and by habit; all this I know,—and Thou knowest it far better. But this consideration, while it humbles me, does not discourage me. Art Thou not my Physician, my Shepherd, my Friend, my Father, my Saviour, in a word, my Jesus? Command then, as a master, whom nothing can resist. At Thy bidding, my evil passions shall be calmed, weakened, and even extinguished, if Thou so willest. Speak but the

word, and every obstacle shall vanish, leaving my heart free to obey the impressions of Thy grace and of Thy love. Oh, that I could be swayed by no other passion but that of desiring Thee, of seeking Thee, of pleasing Thee, of loving Thee in sincerity, of cherishing Thee tenderly, and of treasuring Thee carefully within my heart! I look to Thee, O Jesus, my Lord and my God! for these blessed dispositions. Vouchsafe to grant me them in Thy customary goodness. I am nothing in Thy sight,—less than nothing, because I have sinned; but speak, Lord, and I shall begin again to exist; I shall live, because Thou wilt be wholly in me. Come, then, O my God! and no longer delay.

§ 2.

I am approaching the sacred Altar, but whence comes this calm, this repose which my soul experiences at the thought? How is this?—So near a God whose power and majesty fill me with wonder, and yet no uneasiness!—no fear! but repose, and that, too, the most entire!—I am about to sit down at the Holy Table, I am approaching the Altar of God—the Sanctuary of the Most Holy, whose sacred pages are full of His terrible judgments, and yet no terror, no alarm, no disturbance in my heart! Speak, O my soul! hast thou

reached such a degree of insensibility, that the approach of thy Judge signifies nothing to thee? Not so. Rather, on the contrary, concentrated in thy affections, thou art enjoying thy happiness, and fear touches thee not.

Render thanks to thy Lord, who presents to thee His holy Chalice. Thou hast taken it for thy portion, and His joys are become thy joys, His sorrows thy sorrows. O my soul! thou bearest about with thee many sufferings; and lo! here is before thee, hidden within yon Tabernacle, and waiting to relieve them, the God of compassion, even that God who reigneth for ever. Thou knowest His power: already has He displayed it in thyself, by snatching thee from the world, and subjecting thee to His holy law. Thou knowest His power; but it is His love that confounds thee. Thou perceivest here nothing else but love. Thou listenest, and the loving voice of thy Saviour whispers in thine ear. Tried by tribulation, thou canst divine somewhat of the solace and repose which this holy Tabernacle offers thee. Bowed down with grief, thou prostratest thyself here before the God of all grief. Worn with the buffetings and storms of life, here it is that thou catchest at last a glimpse of rest, the only rest thou desirest.

Behold thy God! no longer a Judge to terrify

thee, but a tender Father! and to this best of fathers thou art now about to give thyself up without reserve. Thou approachest Him by the path of suffering. How beautiful is this path, O my soul! It is from Calvary that Jesus calls to thee; and to Calvary must thou come, in order to reach that Tabernacle where the Sacrifice of His love is perpetuated. Oh, the love, the love of thy God! This is the only thought that now absorbs thee. Seek, then, in that love for the repose which is promised thee. Draw nigh to this God of sorrows, to comfort thyself under the perverse treatment of men. O blind of heart! they have perchance misconstrued thee; they have passed by, and mocked thy sorrows. But thy voice has reached the ear of that God who consoles. Forsake the earth—run—fly to meet Him. He knows and understands thee. He knew thee before thou wast born. He calls thee. Ascend, ascend to the Altar of that God who “makes glad thy youth.” No terrors has He for those who love Him. Draw nigh, thou desolate but confiding soul, all filled with grief and love. That God whom thou art about to receive is One whose sorrow has surpassed all sorrow, whose love surpasses all love.

How sweet, O Lord! are the delights of Thy Tabernacle! How strong the soul becomes when she has sipped from this fountain

of Thy grace. In Thy presence the noisy din of the world sinks hushed at my feet. Like the billows which vainly dash themselves to pieces on the rocky strand, its murmurs die away in my ears, but reach not my heart. My God, how good art Thou! how precious is the repose which Thou providest here for those who seek Thee! Vouchsafe to unite me to Thee for ever. Let suffering be my portion, provided only Thy love be my consolation! Be no longer sad, O my soul! God is here, in this holy Sacrament, and here shalt thou always find Him. Yes, however oppressive be my burden, Thy grace, O Lord! will at all times give me strength to ascend unto that Altar which is my joy, my rest, my hope, my refuge, and my love.

§ 3.

The time is come at last, O my soul! when all thy disquietudes are to find an end at the foot of the Tabernacle in which thy Saviour dwells. Obedient to the teaching of faith, and recognizing thy God beneath the dim veil which hides Him from thy sight, thou art about to taste, in the celestial Manna, the most exquisite of enjoyments here below. But a little while since, He was thy merciful Judge. He heard thy humble confession; He saw thy

tears flow; He forgave thee thy misdeeds. He is now thy Father. Time was when thou didst reject His benefits, and livedst in misery and sin. Oh, make haste to prostrate thyself before the God of Mercy! In His presence thou wilt regain thy lost happiness. Draw nigh to Him; and if He permits thee to feel pain in the recollection of thy past life, His love shall sweeten to thee its bitterness. Draw nigh to Him. He is Himself about to become thy food and nourishment. *Venite et comedite.*

O my Lord and my God! Thy tender invitations overwhelm me. Miserable heart! so long fed on vanity, come, and drink thy fill at the Fountain of truth and life. Oh, for strength to support such felicity! Sink down, my soul, into the abyss of thy own nothingness before the Altar, on which thy God immolates Himself for thee. From yonder throne of His mercy He calls thee to Himself. He demands thee back as a treasure lost too long. Hearest thou the voice of thy God and Saviour? "*Præbe, fili mi, cor tuum*—Give me, my son, thy heart." "Give me that heart which has found in the world only fleeting joys and lengthened miseries!" Yes, Lord, I give it Thee. I come to Thee.

O divine Eucharist! thou delight of poor pilgrims here below, appease my hunger. Blood of my Jesus! quench the burning thirst

which consumes me. Sacred Tabernacle! open wide thy doors. O God of all consolation! O eternal Beauty! O Sun of grace and justice! And is it thus Thou dwellest in the midst of Thy children? and yet Thy children love Thee not! O infinite compassion of my Saviour! how few adore Thee—how few are grateful to Thee! O divine Love, how little art Thou loved! Would that I could make Thee, Lord, some compensation for the neglect which Thou continually sufferest at the hands of men!

Ye powers of heaven, assist my weakness! Ye angels, give me your fervour! Ye cherubim, expand your wings, and veil from me the King of Glory! Oh, how would worldlings envy me, could they but know my happiness! Oh, sweetest of moments! sole charm of my life! Jesus, Jesus appears!

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It is over! I am no longer on earth. My God is mine, and I am His. O my Saviour! inexhaustible Fountain of delights, how happy is he who loves Thee! How is he to be pitied who is able to live a single instant without loving Thee! O God! accept my tears in return for Thy love. Jesus, henceforward be Thou my sweetness, my joy, my rest, my God, my all in all!

AFTER COMMUNION.

We should endeavour at the time of communicating to redouble the warmth of our devotion, and to conceive in our hearts a deep contrition, born of love, a lively affection, resting upon a firm confidence in Jesus, who pardons all who love Him, a faith capable of drawing Jesus to us, and a sole desire for Jesus. During these precious moments, the soul, according to the pains which she has taken, either receives in abundant measure gifts of life, peace, strength, and at times of ineffable joy; or else is well-nigh overwhelmed with dulness, coldness, and lassitude. We should also diligently listen, at this time especially, to the voice of Jesus within our souls, remembering that, whether it speak approvingly or disapprovingly, it is equally the voice of that divine Spouse who desires to enkindle His love within us.

Yes, it is Thou, Lord, who speakest to me. It is thou only whom I wish to hear, O generous, O lovely, O compassionate Jesus! Command, and I will obey; ask of me what Thou wilt, and I will give it Thee; treat me as severely as Thou pleasest, yet will I not cease to love Thee. I was created for Thee; and Thou hast sacrificed Thyself for me. I desire to unite my heart to Thy heart for ever.

It is in Communion that the happy soul, possessed of her God, exclaims, "My Well-beloved is all mine, and I am all His." It is here, if ever, that, dismissing words, as too weak for the expression of her feelings, she speaks heart to heart with her Saviour. Oh, what graces and mysteries are there in this spiritual communion betwixt the soul and her God!

§ 1.

Be silent, my soul, and endeavour to taste and feel what thy Jesus is to thee. Unite thy adorations with those of the angels, who ever attend upon His steps. And is it, then, indeed, Thyself, O all-loving Jesus! that I have received within my heart? Can it be that I actually possess Thee—that Thou art become wholly and entirely my own, and belongest to me even more than I belong to myself? Accept my profoundest homage. My sole delight shall be in Thee; and my only regret is that I have hitherto so much offended, and so little loved Thee. Vouchsafe to receive my gratitude and my love. I am lost in wonder at thinking that Thou, O my God! shouldst come to a creature so unworthy as I am. Ah, Lord! but dost Thou not herein forget what is due to Thy own majesty? Dost Thou not

humiliate thyself too much?" "No," Thou repliest to me, within the depth of my soul, "it is thus that I act as God who pardons, as Man who sympathises, and as Jesus who loves, and cannot refrain from loving; and, after all this, wilt thou ever again be unfaithful to me?" No! my God, I will be faithless to Thee no longer. I desire to be entirely Thine; Thine without reservation; Thine without regard for my passions; Thine steadfastly; Thine without any view to self-advantage; Thine unceasingly, and for ever. I desire to shew henceforth that Thou livest in me, by my good example, by an exact discharge of my duties, by constancy in overcoming my weaknesses, and by taking pains to oblige and to assist others, to excuse their failings, and to anticipate their wishes. *Thou for thy own sake! myself in Thee! and Thou in my neighbour!* henceforth be these three points ever before me in all that I undertake; so that, by the help of Thy grace, I may glorify Thee in all things. I ardently long to please Thee and to love Thee. But all that I can do is little—is nothing; and Thou, O Lord! hast a multitude of other souls more fervent than myself; souls that look to Thee only, that have no affection but for Thee, and possess nought but Thyself in the world. Oh! that I might one day be of their number!

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Oh, that I might imitate their humility, their patience, their charity, their recollection, and their constant union with Thee! Oh, that I might labour, like them, to establish more and more Thy kingdom in my heart, by a courageous penitence and fervent love.

§ 2.

I have just returned from Communion, and my heart is still in an ecstasy. I have been receiving Thee, my well-beloved, and at this moment I possess Thee within me. I feel as though a torrent of graces had been poured down into my soul. Oh, how true it is that the world knows not Thee, O God! knows not the delights which attend Thy love. In Communion the soul is blended, so to say, with the Divinity, and enjoys the peace of angels. Transported with divine joy, she offers Thee the entire homage of her faith, and contemplates her God, O miracle of goodness! humbled and annihilated for her sake, under the lowly appearance of Bread. O Lord Almighty! O God of love! well knowest Thou how to indemnify Thy servants for the little which they forsake in order to follow Thee. Whoever would learn wherein true happiness consists, let him go to holy Communion; let him sit at that divine table.

There it is that life, peace, and the purest felicity are to be found; there it is that the soul enjoys the contemplation of Him whom she loves; there it is that she reposes in joy; there, as from a fountain, she draws fresh strength to bear the burdens of life; there she tastes that happiness which she has so vainly sought for apart from her God; there, in a word, she learns that there exists no other love worthy of her whole heart, except the love of her God; of that God who loves her so much, that He even gave Himself up to death for her sake.

O my Jesus! what can I do for Thee who hast done so much for me? Thou lovest me, O God of love! and I will love none but Thee. Thou hast suffered for me, O Man of Sorrows! I too will suffer for Thee. I find here Thy Cross. I will take it up with joy. I will carry it with constancy. I will nail myself to it by uniting myself to Thee; and with Thee will I expire upon it, by enduring all things for Thy sake. Yes; I will crucify myself with Thee. I will be always on the watch for those little sacrifices which offer themselves at every moment, so that I may be unceasingly dying with Thee. Would that my whole life might be spent in praises and thanksgivings to Thee; and, oh, may my faithfulness and watchfulness over myself by degrees subdue

and destroy in me everything that displeases Thee. I wish to live and die with Thee, and for Thee. Be Thou in all things my divine Pattern. Of Thee may I learn to pray; of Thee may I learn to suffer. With Thee may I drink the chalice of bitterness to its very dregs; with Thee may I give myself wholly up to the will of my heavenly Father; with Thee may I offer myself to God as a whole burnt offering; with Thee may I go to Calvary; with Thee be nailed to the Cross, be pierced through the heart, and, if need be, feel myself even as one forsaken by his God. In a word, may I be ever dying on the Cross with Thee, O my Jesus! may I be ever in Thy company; may I never forsake Thee, may I be shrouded and buried with Thee; and may I be hidden, unknown, and forgotten by the whole world, in order that I may live for Thee, and be known to Thee only.

§ 3.

Full of thy God, and overflowing with the purest joy, wherefore, O my soul! dost thou still sigh? Can it be that Jesus has not satisfied thy boundless desires? Is it possible that, at the banquet of the Lamb, miserable recollections of past pleasure have borne thee back again into the world; or that thy weakness

recoils from the sacrifices which He demands of thee? O my soul! what are the feelings which thus oppress thee in the presence of that God who is the sovereign Lord of all thy faculties?

Ah, I understand those sighs—Oh, miracle of grace! Thou art indignant with thyself—and this thy indignation breaks out in burning sighs, which thou wouldst not exchange for any joy that the world can offer thee. Thou hast been raised to the height of happiness; thou hast seen, by the light of faith, thy God abandoning His glory, in order to console thee in thy troubles by the joy of His presence. Thy Creator is within thee, and that heart, which the universe could not satisfy, is satisfied with its God. And now thou art angry with thyself because thou art still obliged to fix thine eyes on the world, while thy heart would be no longer there. Thou art dying of impatience to be with thy God, and the world, which thou hast cast behind thee, presents an obstacle to the ardour of thy love.

Or have thy sighs another cause? It may be thou grievest because thou hast remained so long at a distance from the Fountain of life without knowing thy misery; because, tormented with a necessity of loving, thou didst not sooner turn to that God who alone could

satisfy all thy affections. And now behold, thy God, pitying thine ignorance, has led thee back to Him by the path of suffering ! Oh, come then, my soul, come, bless that Father who afflicts thee, in order to console thee ; and to bring thee, through thy natural need of consolation, to those joys which He has prepared for thee. All bountiful in His favours, it is He who has shed into thy bosom this sweet uneasiness, these pure emotions, so long unknown to thee. Lose not, then, the present opportunity, but endeavour to profit by the sentiments which thy God inspires. Recollect thyself,—commune with thyself in the depth of thy being. Thou possessest thy God—He is within thee. Oh, what happiness ! How blest is this repose of the soul ! how suitable to thy necessities !

Or it may be thy sighs have yet another cause. Thou grieveest, perchance, to perceive the many weaknesses to which thou art still subject, and which serve to check thy heavenward aspirations. Thou art angry with that sluggish clay, which hinders thee from soaring to thy God. Alas ! there was a time when thou wast too forgetful of these things ;—and now God, by an act of His justice, renders more burdensome to thee thy union with this mortal body. Murmur not at this, O my soul ! but rather, with St. Paul, look forward

to the dissolution of these chains; look forward to the time, when, purified and radiant, thou shalt chant over the wreck of thy body the hymn of immortality; yea, rather to the time, when thy God, who receives thee in death, shall come again in His glory, and restore to thee thy body glorified in Him.

Love and adore—love, and thou wilt find that love is stronger than death. Yes, my God, I love Thee! I am Thine, I am Thine. As for the world, I know it no more, save only as the object of my bitterest recollections. Oh, for the wings of a dove! that I might quit this earth, where Thou art not loved; and might fly to Heaven, where eternal love begins, and knows no end.

Second Exercise

FOR COMMUNION.

A METHOD OF ASSISTING AT MASS WHEN ABOUT
TO RECEIVE HOLY COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections.

FROM the beginning of creation, the Almighty has been unsparing in His benefits to mankind; but the gift which He imparts to us in the Eucharist surpasses every other; for there, in addition to the already immeasurable blessings which the Incarnation has brought us, He communicates to us His entire Self; His body, His blood, His life, His soul, His merits, His humanity, His very divinity. O sublime scheme! O excess of love! worthy of the eternal admiration of mankind! Never would it have entered into the mind of Angel or Archangel to conceive such a miracle of mercy. God alone could have devised it. After this proof of His goodness, what more can we possibly desire? We have all things in the Eucharist, in the Bread of the elect, in the "Wine which maketh virgins."

What infinite bountifulness is here on the part of Jesus Christ! what niggardliness on

our own! How lavishly does He bestow Himself upon us! How sparingly do we give ourselves to Him! or rather, what is there that we have hitherto given Him at all? Two strange marvels here present themselves, and claim our astonishment. On the one hand, Jesus Christ gives Himself up wholly to us; on the other, we refuse to give ourselves up to Him. How confounded ought we to be at so strange a contrast! Oh, let us, in good earnest, give all we have to Him, who has given His all to us.

Consider again; the value of a gift depends almost entirely upon the affection of the giver; this is indeed, so to say, its very soul and life. Now, Jesus Christ gives Himself to us in the divine Eucharist, with a love which can only be compared with Himself. Our Lord instituted the adorable Sacrament of His Body, at the very time when men were preparing to inflict upon Him the most cruel and ignominious of all deaths. They were busy in effecting His destruction, while He, on His part, was engaged in consummating that divine scheme, by which He willed to remain with them for ever. Under the figure of Bread, Christ gives to mankind, in the Eucharist, nothing less than Himself: and this He does, in order to unite us to Himself so intimately, that nothing may be able to separate us from

Him. We may be certain that, in instituting this holy Sacrament, our Redeemer clearly foresaw all the indignities to which He would be continually exposed by means of it. But none of these obstacles hindered His design. He was determined, at any cost, to give Himself to us. "With desire He desired it." *Desiderio desideravi.* Before He came into the world, He suffered Himself to be expected through thousands of years, but when He would enter our hearts, He consults not so much our desires as His own, which vehemently urge Him to unite Himself to us.

This excessive love in our Redeemer would have been altogether inconceivable to us, had not Faith convinced us of it. Nevertheless, how many passions opposed to His love do we still suffer to reign unchecked in our souls! How ardently does He desire to come and dwell in us! How little desirous are we of receiving Him! Alas! is it possible that we can still retain a hankering after the gross meats of Egypt, when we have fed so often on the delicious Manna of the desert! What further do we expect Jesus Christ to do for us, in order to overcome our hardheartedness? Oh, let us confess sincerely, at the feet of our Saviour, what it is that keeps us away from Him. Let us entreat His forgiveness. Let us promise Him to hold in utter de-

testation everything that can possibly defile those hearts in which He has so often dwelt. Let us beseech Him to confirm us in good dispositions, to fill us with love and gratitude, and to keep us ever fervent in His service.

The Eucharist is termed the Communion, because in it Jesus Christ communicates to us His choicest blessings. Himself the God of love, He here makes us partakers of all the merits which He has acquired by His life and death; and renews, for each of us in turn, all the effects of His passion.

Where is the heart that can resist such goodness and such love? Can it be your own? Consider—were Jesus Christ to give Himself but once only to some Angel, in the same manner in which He has so frequently given Himself to you, what would that highly privileged Angel not do? He would be ready to annihilate himself, and to pour out his whole being in reverence and love. He would be overpowered with gratitude towards that God who had vouchsafed to give Himself to one of His own creatures. And you—how do you treat this divine gift of Jesus Christ? You think yourself quit of all you owe Him, if you simply succeed in overcoming some slight feeling of repugnance; if you but feel some weak desire to love Him; if you are able to entertain a few pious

sentiments; and sometimes you seem to yourself even to have conferred a favour on Him, by receiving His Body and Blood on your own self-chosen day. Oh, be confounded and blush at your misery and wretchedness! Will you be for ever thus a partaker in the sacred Banquet of the Lamb, without receiving the full measure of its benefits? Will you for ever continue the same, after having promised Him so often to amend? Will you for ever continue so alive to worldly impressions, so susceptible of the least affront, so sensitive of every slight inconvenience, so negligent in doing good? Entreat Jesus, who vouchsafes to work this great miracle, in order that He may become your food and nourishment—entreat Him to add to this miracle yet another, by working in you an entire change, through the influence of an ardent charity.

Supremely great and divine is this Feast of the Eucharist. God alone is its Author, and He entertains us at it with a magnificence truly infinite. At this sacred Banquet He gives us His own Flesh for our food. He invites to it all the Faithful. He excludes none. He spares nothing, in order to give us an evidence of His goodness. We receive here that self-same God who constitutes the joy of Paradise. The bread that we eat at

this holy table is the Bread of Angels, and a heavenly Manna, "having in it all that is delicious, and the sweetness of every taste." Were Jesus Christ to invite to this Feast none but kings and the great ones of the earth, none but saints and the perfect, then indeed we might with reason excuse ourselves from attending it; but our Lord invites all, without exception; the sick, that He may cure them; the blind, that He may give them sight; the weak, that He may strengthen them; the sorrowful and afflicted, that He may console them; sinners, that He may make them holy; the just, that He may make them perfect.

Thou who readest those lines, what is thy state? Art thou sick? Art thou blind? Art thou weak? Art thou in affliction and misery? For none of these reasons oughtest thou to excuse thyself from coming to this holy Feast, since for such as these it was originally instituted. Art thou sick? Then draw nigh with a firm and lively faith; here is the divine antidote whence thou shalt obtain a cure. Art thou weak? Then approach with a holy confidence; here is the Bread of the strong, which will give thee strength to go forward until thou comest "to the mount of God." Art thou poor? Then approach with joy to this holy Banquet, where thou

wilt find One who comprehends within Himself all the riches of Heaven and earth. Art thou blind? Then cause thyself to be led hither, and thou shalt receive light, which will illuminate thy soul in her passage to eternity. Art thou afflicted? Then run hither with all speed, for here it is that "the God of all consolation" is waiting to communicate to thee His entire Self, that so He may comfort thee in this valley of tears. Art thou a sinner? Keep not away on that account; but, pierced through with a holy regret for the past, and washed in the salutary waters of Penance, draw nigh to this Holy Table; for here it is that thou shalt receive those divine graces which will purify thee more and more from all thy sins. O my soul! and after this, what canst thou fear? What excuse canst thou allege, in order to delay thy approach to the Altar of thy God? Thou art blind. Is it not so? Thou art sick; thou art poor; thou art altogether full of miseries. Ah! it is on this very account thou art invited to this feast; and the very circumstance of thy misery should increase thy confidence in that divine Saviour, who "compels the poor and the feeble to come in to His Supper," and threatens those who refuse with nothing less than eternal death.

O sweet Jesus! encouraged by these

thoughts, I venture to approach Thee. Forgive me my boldness. It is true, my infirmities, my miseries, my sins, might reasonably incline me to keep at a distance; but Thou hast called me, and I am here. None but Thyself, O my Saviour! can render me less unworthy of receiving Thee. Vouchsafe me, then, this grace, O my God! Deal with me as Thou pleasest. Cut off, prune, add, remove, whatsoever Thou wilt. I will ever be submissive to Thy holy will, and will ever glory in acting solely according to Thy good pleasure, and in the strength of Thy grace.

BEFORE MASS.

§ 1.

O my God! I am lost in wonder and awe at the thought of the adorable Mystery of which I am about to partake. I am going to receive Thee, O my God! I am going to eat of that Divine Food which Thou hast prepared for us in Thy mercy. My God will shortly be within me, and I in my God. I shall bear about within me the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth. O divine Mystery! thou abyss of faith, of love, of humility! the Angels themselves cannot fathom thy in-

finite depth. What am I, that I should be admitted to this Banquet, of which the purest Intelligences are unworthy? What am I, that my God should become my Food; that I should be united with His Divinity; that I should become His abode, His temple, His throne, and should thus rival heaven itself? Oh, a felicity such as this ought to be enough to extinguish within me all desire of worldly joys. What happiness can I ever expect from men comparable with this? Surely, while preparing to receive so august a Sacrament, I might well feel a joy piercing to the very marrow of my bones.

What an evidence of almighty power is there in that sublime miracle, in virtue of which the infinite majesty of the Creator descends upon the Altar at the word of the Priest! Accustom thyself, O my soul! to the consideration of this divine prodigy. Be all on fire at the thought that thou art drawing nigh to thy God. Adore His eternal greatness, which, in concealing itself under the figures of Bread and Wine, does but shine forth the more brightly. For here it is that the glory of God, which, if beheld nakedly, would overwhelm, blind, and consume thee, abases itself to thy weakness; here it is that thou art permitted to behold the Invisible One, and yet live; here it is

that He accommodates Himself to thy feebleness, and at the same time exercises thy faith and thy love.

But in order to consummate more perfectly this union between thy flesh and the Flesh of thy Saviour; between thy blood and the Blood of thy crucified God; between thy spirit and the everlasting Word, "by whom all things were made;" remember that thou must be diligent in purifying thy flesh and thy soul. Gold cannot mix with lead; purity can unite only with purity; and the Lamb without spot loves to repose in those hearts, and those alone, which resemble Him, or at least are anxious to resemble Him. The more we grow conformed to Jesus Christ, the more capable do we become of union with Him.

§ 2.

"O God, my God! for Thee do I watch at break of day." Wandering on in this barren and pathless wilderness, where no spring greets the eye, my soul feels an ardent thirst for Thee, and my flesh sighs after Thee. I wait for Thee in thy sanctuary, and contemplate Thy power and glory. What profound emotions thrill through me, as I here kneel beneath Thy sacred roof! My God calls me

to Him. He feels an infinite desire to unite Himself to me, and His love for His poor creature is as great as His own immensity. Were it granted to these dim and feeble eyes of mine to read the heart of Jesus Christ, with what unbounded feelings of charity should I not behold it filled! How vast is the space which each individual of the human race occupies in that divine bosom! With what incomprehensible tenderness does that supreme Goodness extend to me His arms, and draw me to Himself, that He may renew me after His own likeness! Hard-hearted and insensible indeed should I be, if I did not respond to this goodness of my God; if I refused to taste, in all its fulness, the sweetness of His love. Perfection itself deigns to love me. God desires my happiness. It is given me to unite myself to Him, and shall I, meanwhile, remain cold, insensible, and without a single tear of gratitude and joy! O my soul! constrain thyself to realize that thy God loves thee; strive to understand thy God. Represent to thyself His charity more glowing than all the flames of earth and heaven; represent to thyself that Creator Word, of whom all human genius is but the faint shadow; that eternal Beauty, of whom we obtain but a poor conception from all that is most lovely and perfect here below;—and then reflect, that

this adorable Being is regarding thee with an eye full of heavenly love, and beckoning thee to come, and "lean on his breast," even as His beloved disciple leant there of old. It is in the power of faith to show thee this thy God, and presently thou shalt behold Him. He will make Himself perceptible to thee under the appearance of the Sacred Host. Reflect solemnly that it is Himself, that it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God of God, who makes Himself present in the holy Eucharist, and that, in the act of receiving, He enters thy heart, enters thy very essence, and makes thee one with Him.

§ 3.

I am here, O Father eternal ! before Thine Altar, where the Eucharistic miracle is about to be wrought ; that altar which will presently become the throne of Jesus Christ, thy Son ; at which the sacrifice of my Saviour will be renewed ; where His divine Body and Blood will take the place of the bread and wine ; where He who made heaven and earth is preparing to give Himself to me, and to become my Food. From yon august spot my divine Saviour will come to me. Ere long I shall be kneeling on those altar-steps, worn by frequent prayer ; and there, prostrate before

the King of kings, I shall partake of the Feast of Angels. "Magnify the Lord, O my soul! and rejoice, my spirit, in God my Saviour." I see the Priest appear from whose hands I shall receive the heavenly Victim. The mystery of salvation, the adorable Sacrifice, is on the point of commencing.

Lord, I smite my breast, and bewail my iniquities. The nearer the time approaches for my being united with holiness itself, the more sinful do I seem. My corruption presents itself before me in all its deformity. I envy the Angels, and weep because I bear so little resemblance to the Saints. Oh, may the intercession of the divine Victim effect my purification! The holy Sacrifice of the Mass, at which I am about to assist, can alone render my contrition acceptable to Thee.

DURING MASS.

The *sign of the Cross*, with which Holy Mass commences, reminds me, that the servants of a Saviour crucified for the world ought to be crucified to it themselves. This holy sign is the earliest act of fidelity to Jesus Christ that the Christian learns; and, accompanied as it is by an act of faith, comprises within itself the whole sum of religion, at

once impressing upon the mind the doctrine of the adorable Trinity, and serving as a memorial of human redemption.

While reciting the *Confiteor*, let me vividly portray to myself that degree of perfection which God demands of the Christian; and let me strive to realize the necessity under which I lie, of unceasingly labouring to purify my heart; that heart destined to the ineffable happiness of becoming His temple. Vouchsafe, Lord, to efface every smallest vestige of its former stains; and may the humble and sincere confession of my sins dispose my soul to respond in some measure to the humility of that God who abased Himself for me, and annihilated Himself so far as to become man, and “obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Kyrie eleison—“Lord have mercy.” I utter to Thee a cry of distress, of confidence, and of love. Hearken to the entreaty of Thy servant, who is sick, and calls for a physician; who mourns, as a prodigal son returning to his Father; who implores forgiveness, as a rebellious subject at the feet of a merciful king; who looks up to Thee, as a slave to a master possessing power to break his fetters; who calls after Thee, as a bride in search of her well-beloved.

The priest is now saying the *Gloria in ex-*

celsis. What ardour, what depth of Christian love glows in this divine hymn! Derived in its first origin from the celestial choirs, it seems to breathe the very love of Angels. In this sublime outpouring of faith, the soul unites herself to the will of her God, and becomes identified with her Lord. Casting aside all self-glory, she makes the glory of her Creator her own, by suffering herself to be absorbed in Him, and thus elevates herself to the most intimate union with God, that the spirit of man is capable of. Burning with desire to set forth the praise of her Lord, and steeped in the sweetest and sublimest sentiments, she abandons herself to transports of love, and ardently longs to behold all her brethren in the enjoyment of a peace resembling her own. Then speeding her way from earth to Heaven, and from man to God, on the wings of the Cherubim, she "praises, she blesses, she adores, she glorifies" her mighty Redeemer, and "gives thanks, for His great glory, to the Lord God, and heavenly King, God the Father Almighty," blessed for ever and ever. Yes, O Saviour of men! I bless Thee, I glorify Thee, I unite myself to Thee. O divine Intercessor! O eternal High Priest! O victim ever renewed! I desire to prepare within me a habitation worthy of Thee; and entreat Thee to build it up with Thine own

hands, and to adorn it with those virtues which most attract Thy presence.

The *Gospel* is being read.—Lord, vouchsafe me grace to understand the sacred words of Thy holy Gospel, those words which “are spirit and life;” those words by which I must regulate my conduct in every action of the day, if I would convince Thee of my love.

Credo.—“I believe.”—Oh, that I might utter those words from my inmost heart and soul, and not from mere force of habit! Oh, that they sprang from the very depth of my being! I believe,—yes, Lord, I believe all the truths which Thou hast vouchsafed to reveal; I believe Thy Holy Catholic Church, which proposes them to us; I believe especially in that mystery of Thy love, Thy Real Presence in the adorable Eucharist. Maintain, fortify, quicken, increase in me this faith, O my God! for well I know it is the first and most essential disposition requisite for my union with Thee; and if we gather but little fruit from the ineffable grace of the Eucharist, it almost always arises from the weakness of our faith. “I believe, Lord; help Thou my unbelief.”

The *Offertory* is proceeding.—How vividly does this portion of the holy Mass bring before me Thy prayer, O my Saviour! at Gethsemani. I behold Thee passing the brook of

Cedron, and entering the garden of Olives. Thou biddest Thy disciples sit down; Thou takest with Thee Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and beginnest "to be exceedingly troubled." Thy soul "becomes sorrowful, even unto death!" Thou withdrawest from Thy disciples, and, falling with Thy face to the earth, prayest, saying, "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." The hour predestined from eternity is come. Thou acceptest the death of the cross; Thou sweatest great drops of blood, which "trickle down upon the ground;" and, "being in an agony, Thou prayest the longer." Consider, O my soul! if, in every case, the amount of an affliction is proportionate to the capacity which the mind possesses of realizing it, then what must have been the measure of the afflictions of thy Saviour, whose mind partook of the Divine Immensity. He is about to suffer the chastisement due for all the sins, past, present, and to come, of all mankind! In vain wilt thou strive to understand the greatness of this punishment; and, after this, wilt thou dare to complain of thy own petty sufferings? O adorable Jesus! O infinite Holiness! O almighty Love! how can we escape being inflamed with love for Thee; for Thee, who hast suffered so

much, for no other reason but to procure for us eternal happiness, and the ineffable delight of being united with Thy Divinity?

Sursum corda.—"Lift up your hearts," the priest exclaims, as he begins the preface. How sublime an exhortation! and how needful for those who are about to present themselves at the Holy Table! O my Saviour! Thou art "the way, and the truth, and the life." Give me grace to keep Thy commandments. Away all vain thoughts of the world! I desire that my mind may be occupied with thoughts of my God alone, and of that divine Food which He is preparing for me. Lord, grant me that Spirit of truth "which teacheth all things." Forsake me not. Grant me Thy peace. I have one only wish, one only anxiety, namely, that I may regulate my life according to Thy commandments. Teach me, then, to keep Thy divine precepts; teach me to abide in Thy love. In Thee alone shall I ever find the fulness of joy.

The hour is come. The *Consecration* is at hand. The Sacrifice of the Passion is about to be renewed upon yonder altar. Grant me grace, Lord, to gather from it those blessed fruits which it abundantly supplies,—the sanctification of my soul, the renewal of my heart, and the transformation of my entire being, that, as a pure victim, I may be sacrificed with

Thee, O my Saviour! to the glory of Thy Father.

The priest is about to utter the sacred words. All the faithful bow down. I tremble with awe. Heaven opens her everlasting doors. The Angels surround the altar, and Jesus Christ descends upon it.

* * * * *

Jesus Christ is present here! "The heavens have dropped down dew from above, and the clouds have rained the Just." The Saviour of the world is in this temple—is near me—is close to me. Had I but an ardent faith in this profound mystery, I should be rapt, like St. Paul, into the third heavens. Yea, rather, I should sink down into the infinite abyss of my own nothingness, rejoicing to be overwhelmed under the stupendous vastness of the miracle which has but just taken place. God, —God Himself, in His most holy Humanity, is on yonder altar. Am I thoroughly penetrated with this thought? Ah, if I were, my knees would be trembling, mine eyes dissolved in tears, my heart fainting, and my life ready to depart. Jesus, the Saviour of men, the Son of God, the Word by whom all things were made, is at this very moment within a short space of me. Ye Angels and Archangels, who veil your faces with your wings before the brightness of His Presence! impart

to me, I beseech you, some sparks of your love and adoration. I bitterly feel the weakness and misery of man, and long to love with the same fervour as yourselves. O blessed Spirits! man is too weak to enjoy the presence of his God; enkindle my charity by your angelic inspirations. Better for me to fall dead at the feet of my Saviour, than remain cold and insensible before Him, as the stones on which I am kneeling.

My Saviour, I am in Thy presence, in the presence of Thee who art "the beginning and the end," who art "He that was to come," who art "the Lord," "the first and the last," "inhabiting eternity," and holding "the keys of death and of hell." "Power and wisdom, and greatness, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing," be to my Redeemer, for ever and ever.

I believe in Thee, I adore Thee, O my divine Master! I am walking through a barren desert, and Thou art the Manna that drops from heaven to appease the hunger which consumes me. I long for this Bread of God which gives life to the world; for "he that cometh to Thee shall not hunger; and he that believeth in Thee shall never thirst." This Bread which Thou offerest me is "Thy flesh, which Thou hast given for the life of the world." "Except I eat of

the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, I shall not have life in me." He that eateth Thy Flesh, and drinketh Thy Blood, "hath everlasting life, and Thou wilt raise him up in the last day."

O Lamb without spot! intercede for me, and purify my soul, that she may approach Thee. Lord, enter Thou under my roof, and I will anoint Thy head with oil, I will bathe Thy feet with precious spikenard, and will prostrate myself to the earth before Thee, so that Thou mayest say unto me, as Thou didst to the woman who was a sinner, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

The priest has finished his communion.—I am about to approach the Altar; my God, have mercy on me. My heart is bursting with love and with joy. I am going to be united to my Well-beloved. Oh, that He may come! that He may descend into my bosom. I burn to receive my Jesus into the secret depth of my heart; my existence will lose itself in His; I shall be born anew in Him. Holy Virgin! vouchsafe me some portion of thy heavenly humility and most perfect purity.

O Spirit of love, of holy unction, and of charity! O celestial fire! O Power of the Lord's right hand! come, and fill my soul, that I may worthily receive Jesus Christ.

O my Saviour! there is no place more worthy of Thee than Thyself. Empty me, then, of myself, O my God! and establish Thyself within me; so that when Thou comest to me, Thou mayest be received not by me, but by Thyself, and with the same love that Thou bearest to Thyself.

O my God! I offer Thee, to supply the deficiency of my own merits, the holy dispositions of all the saintly souls who have worthily communicated, or are now doing so, or shall do so to the world's end.

I rise to present myself before Thee. My soul burns with an ardent thirst. Oh, give unto her the living water.

AFTER COMMUNION.

§ 1.

What shall I offer Thee, O my God! to testify my gratitude? Nought have I that is worthy of Thee. But what do I say? Rather, I am rich, and have all things in possessing Thee. I offer Thee, then, Thyself. Be Thou my thank-offering, since I cannot praise Thee worthily.

Lord, Thou art within the depth of my heart; hearken, I beseech Thee, to its secret voice. Make me to live by faith. Keep me from Thy wrath, which is ready to fall upon those who "hold the truth of God in injustice." Abandon me not to my own devices. Vouchsafe me perseverance in good works; and grant me grace to walk henceforward in newness of life. Grant me to take delight "in the law of God according to the inward man;" and to draw from this Communion such divine graces, that, instead of being "subject to the law of sin according to the flesh," I may become "subject to the law of God according to the Spirit."

O my Saviour, who has vouchsafed to "keep the Pasch with me" this day in my heart! suffer not the destroying angel to enter my dwelling; and so fill me with Thyself, that Satan, who "goeth about seeking to devour," may find no entrance. Thou, who didst cast out devils from bodies which they had long occupied, wilt not suffer them to take possession of a soul into which Thou hast entered. With Moses and the Israelites I will sing, and say, "The Lord is gloriously magnified; He is my strength and my praise, and He is become my salvation. He is my God, and I will glorify him; the God of my fathers, and I will exalt Him."

Time was when the fountains of virtue seemed to me full of bitterness; but the oftener I have approached Thee, O adorable Master! the more has duty lost its stern aspect; even as Thy goodness sweetened the waters of Mara, whereof the Israelites could not drink.

O my God! I bless Thee, because "I have found grace in Thy sight," and because "Thou knowest me by my name;" "Thou wilt have mercy on whom Thou wilt, and Thou forgivest those whom it pleaseth Thee to forgive." It is not in my power to behold Thy countenance, for "no man shall see Thee and live;" but Thou concealest Thyself under the veil of the Eucharist, and beneath this veil I possess Thee.

Lord, "the soul which has been perverted is with difficulty set right," and "the number of the foolish is infinite." Grant me grace to quit the path wherein I have been well-nigh lost, and let me not again be tempted to return to it. O Thou who reposest in the depth of my heart, cause me to feel, now and for ever, the utter nothingness of all that the world can give. In possessing Thee, O compassionate High Priest! O Prince of Peace! O Father of the world to come! O Fount of living water! O Light "which enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world!" I am already in Heaven. Inspire me, then, with that

contempt for all the false pleasures of earth, which Thy Saints feel, sitting in the eternal tabernacles; and convince my soul, that "all that is done under the sun is only vanity and vexation of spirit;" that without religion the wisdom of men is but foolishness, their knowledge error, their riches a burden and hindrance, their greatness nought but care, their mirth a deceit, their pleasure a dream, and their joy a phantom.

O my Saviour! I give myself up to Thee, even as Thou didst give Thyself for me. I resign myself to Thee without reserve, that I may be happy, as Thou didst resign Thyself to Thy Father, in order to suffer. I entreat Thee to burn and wholly consume on Thy altar of propitiation, by the fire of Thy infinite charity, all the sins which I have committed through the whole course of my life. I confess to Thee my baseness and unworthiness; and in so doing I desire to magnify Thy goodness and illimitable mercy. O most sweet Jesus! purest object of all love! I despise myself, I abase myself, in order that I may praise Thee and exalt Thee now and eternally.

§ 2.

Eternal Power! infinite Perfection! adorable Holiness! I bend my knees before Thy

holy Tabernacle; I prostrate myself in adoration at the foot of Thy sacred Altar; and oh, that I could duly feel the whole depth of my nothingness; so as to honour Thy majesty more profoundly! My soul longs to annihilate herself before Thee; and willingly would I forget all things, except my sins, Thy greatness, Thy mercy, and Thy love. I adore Thee, O my God! and render Thee homage with all the faculties of my being, with all my heart, with all my soul, and with all my mind: with my heart, by loving Thee; with my soul, by praising Thee; with my mind, by submitting it to faith. It is my sweetest delight to feel that I possess within me, as in a living tabernacle, the Saint of saints; and that, in the Holy Eucharist, I honour Thee in a manner worthy of Thy immortal majesty. Honour, glory, and blessing be to "Him that cometh in the name of the Lord;" blessed be the eternal Son of the Most High, "the Lamb without spot, who taketh away the sins of the world!"

§ 3.

I have received Thee, O my Saviour! my Well-beloved! my Consoler! my Heavenly Spouse! I have been divested of my defiled

robe, and will not again put it on. My God has entered within my soul, and she has felt His adorable presence. At this moment He is whispering in the recesses of my being. I have sought Him, and at length have found Him.—I call to Him, and He makes answer. My Well-beloved is a chosen one among a thousand. He is Almighty, and all lovely. O my Jesus! I love Thee;—but shew me how to love thee still more. I praise Thee;—but teach me to praise Thee better. I desire to please Thee; but reveal to me what I must do in order to please Thee effectually. “O Lord, my God! how wonderful is Thy name through the whole earth!” How worthy art Thou of the love of Angels and men! and “what is man that thou visitest him?” O Lord, the Hope of the Saints! Thou art the life of my soul, that life by which it lives, and without which it must die. O joy of my heart and my spirit, make me to love nought but Thee; make Thy love take full possession of my soul, inasmuch as it was Thou “who first lovedst me.”

§ 4.

How have I deserved this honour, O my God! how have I deserved thus to receive the most precious of Thy gifts! What can I say

in acknowledgment of all the mercies which Thou hast poured upon me from the day of my birth till now?

Before Thou didst weigh the heavens or hollow out the depths of the sea; before Thou didst enkindle the sun, or scatter the stars as dust through the immensity of space; already Thou hadst placed me in Thy adorable decrees among Thy creatures; already I existed in Thy infinite Intelligence; and the idea of my creation is eternal as Thine own wisdom. Of Thy free mercy alone it is that I breathe the breath of life. And if, O Almighty Creator! Thou hast made me "a little lower than the angels," inasmuch as these happy spirits ever behold Thee face to face, whilst I am only permitted to see Thee through a veil, and in hope; nevertheless Thou hast raised me even above these pure Intelligences, in this respect, that Thou hast taken upon Thee the nature of man, and not the nature of angels, and art not God and angel, but God and Man.

But above all do I glorify Thy name, O Thou supreme Truth! for Thy having crowned all Thy other benefits, by vouchsafing me the happiness of possessing Thee, by admitting me to feast on that living Bread which confers a blessed immortality. Oh, for thanksgivings bearing some proportion to such an incompre-

hensible mercy ! Eternal Trinity ! Thou art to Thyself Thine own glory and praise ; and the adorable Son, made Man, renders Thee thanks for us, even He who has loved us so much, as to give Himself to us, and at the same time to become our Thank-offering.

Before leaving Church.

O my God ! I feel that I am made one with Thee. As bodies are embalmed in order to preserve them from corruption, so hast Thou become to me a spiritual frankincense, embalming my soul and body, and preserving them to life eternal. I am full of happiness, because Thou art within me. Yes ! my God is within me, and here will His graces, His gifts abide, until sin drives them hence. Oh, may that never be ! my Jesus ! stay with me always. Forsake me not, but accompany me whithersoever I go.

Oh, marvellous treasure, concealed within the depths of my being ! Oh, mysterious fellowship ! I am not alone ; my God is within me. I am made equal with the Angels. Lord, grant me grace, that I may not, like some of them, fall from Heaven and perish eternally.

Third Exercise

FOR COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections.

“MISERABLE beings that we are!” exclaims St. Peter Chrysologus; “Jesus Christ was passing on His way through Galilee, and He healed a woman who had been ill twelve years, and who did but touch the hem of His garment. Jesus Christ gives Himself to us every day, and yet our maladies are not removed!” Can it be, then, that Jesus fails us in our need? Assuredly not. That which fails us is our faith. We believe little, and that little we believe badly; and we merit not that Jesus should say to us, as He did to that woman, “Be of good cheer; thy faith hath made thee whole.”

What idea can we have formed to ourselves of Holy Communion! Know we not that the Eucharist is a Sacrament which demands more faith than any other; that Jesus Christ, in vouchsafing it to us, demands of us, in return, the submission of all our thoughts and senses;

and that in truly believing His real and substantial Presence in the Sacrament of His love, we render Him the most perfect homage that we are capable of?

The holy Eucharist is the most sublime act of worship that the Catholic Church can offer to Almighty God. In the other Sacraments, the spirit of faith is sustained and strengthened by the light of reason; but in that of the Eucharist, reason itself, together with all the senses, is brought into subjection to faith; and the whole man is sacrificed to the sovereign power of God. Ah! did we but believe with a living faith in this great truth of Jesus Christ's Real Presence in the Eucharist, with what supreme veneration, humility, and awe should we not present ourselves at the Holy Table! And on returning from it, bearing Jesus Christ within us, what acts of thanksgiving should we not render him! What benefits should we not expect from His mercy! What illuminations should we not draw from the Fountain of all truth! And what Divine strength should we not carry away with us from the Sanctuary of our God!

St. Francis of Sales used to feel profound astonishment at seeing persons so cold after frequent Communion; and, in fact, that it should be so, especially in the case of souls devoted to perfection, is in itself a kind of

mystery. They are nourished, all but daily, on the Body and Blood of Christ, and yet they are all ice towards Him; they know not how to speak to Him, they have no earnest desire to conform themselves to His teaching and example; and all this because their faith is without strength and life; because when they come to Communion they do not ask for faith; because they do not make it a subject of prayer; because they do not habitually look upon themselves as incorporated with Jesus, and as living on Jesus, whose Body, whose Blood, whose Soul, and whose very Divinity they have received in this adorable Sacrament. Oh! how great was the spirit of faith in the Saints! They lived as though they were ever preparing themselves for Communion. They embraced a hidden, interior life, in order to honour that profound silence and incomprehensible mystery in which Jesus dwells under the sacramental species. "O God!" they were wont to exclaim, in holy transport, with the prophet, "*Verily, Thou art a hidden God*"; and in this Thy divine retirement may we also be hidden with Thee."

BEFORE COMMUNION.

While preparing ourselves for Holy Communion, we should endeavour, above all things, to excite our faith. There is no disposition more necessary for worthily approaching the Divine Eucharist than a full and entire faith: and this, too, is the source of all the other requisite dispositions.

Faith.

My soul, knowest Thou what thou art about to do? Hast thou carefully considered the sublime act for which thou art preparing? Hast thou reflected what Holy Communion really is? Assisted by the grace of thy God, come and meditate upon this divine Mystery; come and contemplate the Eucharist by the light of faith. Abandoning every other light, take the celestial lamp which faith places in thy hand, and observe well what she shows thee. Her light is sufficient for thee. Thy mind is prone to error; thy understanding is limited; thy imagination is easily misled; thy reason is swayed, alas! how often, by a fatal pride! It would know all things, examine all things, judge all things; and what is the end of all this? It goes astray, and is lost. Faith is the only sure and infal-

lible guide; reason should conduct us to faith, but here it should stop, and proceed no further.

Behold me, Lord, at thy feet. I have renounced those false lights which are so often taken for the true, and I am come to receive light from Thee. Farewell to those deceitful gleams which exhibited their momentary flashes, only to plunge me into an obscurity still more profound than before. Behold me at thy feet. Incapable of knowing anything of myself, I cried out to Thee from the depth of my darkness, "Enlighten me, O Lord!" and straightway Thou repliedst, "Let there be light;" and Thy divine light was enkindled in my soul. O sovereign Truth! thy beneficent rays have caused a new day to dawn upon me—the day of faith, holy faith! Henceforth be Thou my sole good, my only treasure upon earth; so shalt Thou conduct me safely to those treasures which alone are real—the treasures of eternity.

Behold me, O my God! on my knees before Thee. I believe all the truths of that holy religion which Thou Thyself hast vouchsafed to reveal to man. I believe them, and gladly would I seal them with my blood. But in a still more especial manner do I believe in the Sacrament of thy love. Come then, O my soul! come, and consider this divine mystery,

this miracle of thy Lord's inconceivable charity. Contemplate the greatness, goodness, and mercy which it exhibits; gaze upon this fountain of grace, and strive, by the lively ardour of thy faith, to obtain possession of it in all its fulness.

What art thou, then, about to do? Is it enough to say that thou art going to receive thy God into thy house—beneath thy roof? No! Holy Communion is something still more even than this. Thou art going to receive Him into thy very heart, into the profoundest recesses of thy being. Weigh this well. *Thy God is about to enter within thee.* Consider who God is. Reflect deeply upon that sublime word, that august name, God. Understandest thou its meaning? Meditate thereon a moment with silence and awe.—All that is greatest, most perfect, most lovely; the Creator of all things; the Sovereign Lord of the universe; the Most High; the Infinite; the Incomprehensible; whose immensity, whose goodness, whose almighty power, and boundless perfections it surpasses human language to describe:—all that is expressed in that one awful word, God. And this God is *thy* God. O transporting thought! He created thee; He made thee what thou art; He preserves thee in being; He daily pours down upon thee a thousand

benefits; and to crown all, He is now about to give thee Himself. Not satisfied with having created thee, He redeemed thee; (and at how great a cost!) and now He is about to feed thee with His own Substance; and to fill thy soul with all conceivable blessings at once, by His presence within thee. He becomes, in a certain real manner, thy own possession. He offers Himself for thee. Lift up thine eyes, and behold the holy Victim immolated for thee upon the Altar. . . . O Jesus Christ! O my Saviour! how good art Thou! how worthy of all love! Thou Thyself desirest to be united with me. I believe it so to be. I acknowledge Thee to be present here beneath these outward shadows, which conceal Thee from my senses, but cannot hinder my heart from flying to Thee. Yes, I believe,—I believe from the bottom of my soul that Thou art here present; and that it is Thou Thyself whom I am about to receive. Bless, then, O my soul! bless and adore the incomprehensible love of thy God!

Adoration.

Believing Thee to be here present, as I do, O my God! well it becomes me to annihilate myself before Thee in the profoundest adoration. And oh, that I could do so worthily!

Faith teaches me what Thou art, and what I am. I acknowledge Thine absolute power, and my entire dependence upon Thee. I love this dependence; I cherish it; I am no longer my own; with the whole intensity of my will I declare myself to be altogether Thine. The more entirely Thou hidest Thyself from my senses, the more profoundly do I adore Thee. Faith dispels the mist and darkness that surround Thee. Beneath these humble signs she exhibits Thee to me as my Sovereign Lord; and I, confessing Thy Presence, fall prostrate at Thy feet, exclaiming with St. Thomas, "My Lord and my God!"

Humility.

My soul, if it is faith that brings thee here this day, and if it is by her light that thou art walking, thou wilt not find it difficult to humble thyself, yea, to abase thyself in the dust. Cast thine eyes around. Look about thee for thy God, the Incomprehensible, the Infinite, the Almighty! Whereabouts is that sublime Majesty, before whom the Powers of Heaven tremble? He is in yonder tabernacle. Oh, marvellous pattern of humility! But what am I, Lord, that I should draw nigh to Thee! A being drawn out from nothingness—mere dust and ashes; how dare I appear in Thy presence!

There is that also which separates me still further from Thee than this—sin! O my God! did I but view sin as it really is in Thy sight, never, never could I make up my mind to approach Thee. I have sinned, and Thou art Holiness itself. “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” Alas! what am I saying? If Thou departest, what will become of me? Rather, then, O my Saviour! stay and look upon my infirmities. See how great my misery is; and may the sight of it attract Thy compassion! My soul is altogether unworthy of being united to Thee; but “speak the word only, and it shall be healed.”

Hope.

I believe Thy words, O Lord! Thou hast said, “*Come unto Me*; the more burdened, the more wearied, the more distressed, so much the more consolation shall ye find.” My sinfulness is great, and I acknowledge it; but Thy compassion is infinite, and therein I place all my confidence. Hope, O my soul! hope in thy God. He is thy Saviour, He Himself hath said so; He Himself calleth thee; hearken to His voice; listen in faith. It is true, thou hast sinned; but it was to save sinners that Jesus came down below. Thou hast disobeyed His law; but He is ever ready to accept a repent-

ant heart. He calls thee in order that He may pardon thee. He comes to thee to load thee with benefits. Unlock the door of thy heart, and give entrance to hope. Thou canst do nothing; but thy Saviour can do all things. Provided thou art animated with a living faith, thy sinfulness and misery, far from terrifying thee, will become the foundation of thy confidence.

O my God! I hope all things, inasmuch as I hope in Thee, even in Thee who lovest me so much, as to be willing to descend into this my miserable being.

Contrition.

Lord, I am guilty exceedingly before Thee, as Thou well knowest; and here, in Thy Presence especially am I bound to bewail myself. I have received from Thee a soul, mind, heart, and other faculties wherewith to adore Thee, to know Thee, to love Thee, and to serve Thee; have I done so? I owe Thee all my love; have I given it Thee? Thou hast created me for Thyself alone; have I lived for Thee? Thou hast ransomed me at the price of Thy Blood; Thine by redemption, as by creation, have I given myself up to Thee alone? Thou hast adopted me for Thy child in Baptism; alas! how often have I forgotten that Thou art

my Father! I have taken Thee for my Lord and Master; but have I obeyed Thee as such? Ah, no! Too often have I disowned Thee, by violating Thy holy law. Sin came, and separated me from Thee. O my soul! hast thou ever considered by the light of faith the horrible nature of sin? Look upon the Cross; feel, if thou canst, what it is to lose the Sovereign Good; what it is to incur the hatred of God, to be the enemy of thy God, to be the cause of grief, of pain, of death to thy God: this is sin; and thou hast committed it. But this is not all; thy God called thee back to Him again; thy loving Father extended to thee His arms; Jesus once more opened to thee His heart; thou didst receive thy pardon; yea, more, thou didst receive thy Saviour Himself; and, after all this, lo! thou hast disowned Him afresh. Thou hast forgotten Him, displeased Him, driven him out of thy heart, at the very time when He was wishing, desiring, entreating to dwell there. Understandest thou, feelest thou, abhorrest thou this ingratitude? Above all, comprehendest thou that excess of goodness which so many offences have been unable to weary and repulse? O my poor soul! return, return to thy God. See what He has done for thee, and what thou hast done against Him, and endeavour to be penetrated with a sense of it. Behold, yet once again, thy heavenly Father

opens to thee the bosom of His mercy; make haste, and throw thyself upon it. Yet once more Jesus knocks at the door of that heart, which, created for Himself, has become the property of others; which, ransomed by Him, has delivered itself over to His enemy: which, having received Him for its Lord and Master, has chosen, in preference, Satan; which, having Him for a Father, has cast contempt upon its celestial origin; which, nourished upon His Flesh and Blood, and united to Him in the divine Eucharist, has trampled under foot all His graces, in order to return to its former wretchedness. And yet, notwithstanding all this, Jesus comes again seeking His lost sheep, that He may bring it back to the fold; again He knocks at the door of this guilty but now repentant heart, desiring to enter into it anew, and re-establish Himself and inhabit therein.

My God, language has no words to express Thy goodness and exalt Thy mercies. My soul cannot give utterance to the sentiments with which she feels inspired; but she is overwhelmed with bitterness at the remembrance of her past offences; above all, at the remembrance of the abuse to which she has turned Thy manifold gifts and graces. O God, most holy and most perfect! O God, all-lovely and all-good! how could I continue

so long without knowing Thee, without serving Thee, without loving Thee! The recollection of it afflicts me, and crushes my heart with grief. Forgive me, Lord. No other ground have I upon which to rest my petition, save that of Thy infinite merits. I implore of Thee pardon for the past, and strength for the future; and I promise Thee that I will be henceforth Thy true and faithful servant!

Love.

I have been contemplating, O Lord! Thy tender mercies; and my soul, enlightened by faith, is unable to contain her gratitude and loving transports. O my God! my Saviour! my Jesus! Thou art my sole good, my happiness, and my true life. Ever since I came into being, I have desired to be loved, and Thou didst love me even when I was not. All my life long I have yearned to love, and to find a heart deserving of my love, and responding to my own; and, behold! Thou hast been to me even more than this. O Jesus! O God of Charity! set my heart on fire with Thy celestial flame. Give it a distaste for, and detachment from, everything that is not Thee. Fill it with Thyself alone. Thou art my God, my Saviour, my Father,

my Friend, my Spouse! Oh, that I could love Thee to the extent demanded by such endearing titles! O my Well-beloved! O my sole and sovereign Good! I desire Thee only, for Thou art the life of my soul, the delight of my days, and the joy of my heart. Oh, that love, holy love, may overflow my whole soul, as I receive the God of all love! Oh, that I may live, breathe, and act only for Thee, my God! Oh, that I may ardently desire to please Thee; and find my sole happiness in being united to Thee!

Desire.

Lord, I firmly believe that Thou art my God; that Thou art all lovely and all good; that Thou lovest me, and seekest to pour upon me Thy benefits; and that Thy Presence cannot fail of rendering me supremely happy. And can I, then, avoid desiring Thee, O my Jesus! and shall I not endeavour to hasten by my sighs that blessed moment which is to give Thee to my soul! O my Saviour! O my Well-beloved! Thy poor child can no longer live without Thee. My soul desires and longs for Thee with a holy impatience.—Increase in her more and more this desire which consumes her, and make haste to give Thyself to her, with such an abundance of

graces, that she may become Thine for ever
Amen.

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AFTER COMMUNION.

If, on approaching the Holy Table, you were penetrated with lively faith and holy reverence, what must be your feelings on returning from it! Ah! in vain will you endeavour to express them by words. Leave, then, your soul to herself for a while. A true realization of the sublime mystery which has been wrought within her is enough to check the utterance of the lips, and even the formation of distinct thoughts. That which becomes her best is silence, a silence breathing nought but adoration, reverence, transport, self-annihilation. Be silent, then. Stir not. Thy God is within thee!—let this thought absorb every faculty of thy soul.

If, after some time, you feel the want of some forms of prayer, you will find them below; but provided your thoughts do not wander, God and your own heart are all that you need.

Faith.

O my soul! a little while ago thou wast filled with transport at the thought, that thy Saviour was about to enter within thee. He has now actually descended into the depth of thy being; thou possessest Him within thyself! Oh, profound truth! Oh, sublime mystery of faith! With difficulty can I realize it; with difficulty can I bear the thought of my happiness!

I believe that the great God, the Creator of

the universe, the most holy God, the Most High, the Eternal, the Incomprehensible, the Infinite, is become my own. The Infinite!—O wonderful thought!—that I should possess the Infinite! that I should be united to the Infinite! that I should become one with the Infinite!—I believe that the Saviour of the world, the Redeemer of all mankind, the Son of the Eternal, who became Man, and died a Victim for human salvation, and for my own in particular,—I believe that this same Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is within me. O wonderful thought!—that I should possess Jesus Christ!—that I should be united to Jesus Christ!—that I should become one with Jesus Christ! I believe that the God of Love, the Spirit of life, light, and grace, the Sanctifier and Comforter, God the Holy Ghost, is within me. O wonderful thought—that I should possess the Holy Ghost!—that I should be united to the Holy Ghost!—that I should become one with the Holy Ghost!—that I should be united with the whole adorable Trinity! Oh, it is too much, it is too much! My weak nature cannot sustain it. Think, O my soul! God is now in the very centre of thy being! He is become *thy* God.—O Jesus!—O divine Jesus! I believe it to be so, I believe it from the bottom of my heart.

Adoration.

I adore Thee, O ineffable Deity! I bow down my whole being before Thy infinite greatness. My spirit, my understanding, my senses, all my faculties abase themselves in the dust before Thee, O Fount of all being! sole essential Existence! Inscrutable God! the less I comprehend Thee, the more do I adore Thee. I annihilate myself before Thee. It is the delight of my soul to do so. I profoundly acknowledge that all I possess flows from Thy free goodness: I offer Thee all that I have received from Thee. I acknowledge Thee for "my Lord and my God." With Thy unbelieving Apostle, I asked to see Thee and touch Thee. Faith replied, yea, God Himself made answer, "Blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." This was enough for me. Oh, blessed words! Oh, divine sentence—heir-loom of the Church through all time! I heard, and was content. O Jesus, I adore Thee within me! Thou art my God; Thou art my Lord! I desire no other. Henceforth I consecrate myself to Thy service, and render Thee the homage of all that I have and all that I am.

Humility.

O my Saviour! before receiving Thee I exclaimed, "Depart from me, for I am a sin-

ful man, O Lord!" I have now received Thee, and what can I say? Sinner as I am, I have just been united to the God of all holiness, to the God thrice holy. Lord, bethink Thee where Thou art. Bethink Thee into what a miserable heart Thou hast descended. Dost Thou not shudder with horror while entering it, far more than when approaching the tomb of Lazarus? Oh, this dead heart of mine!—But Thou hast vouchsafed to restore it again to life. Thou didst call aloud; from the depth of the grave it heard Thy voice; and lo! it returns to Thee. It returns to Thee, Lord, but, alas! it is still very weak. Take pity, then, and vouchsafe to foster this breath of life which Thou hast breathed into it anew: increase the light which Thy grace has enkindled. Keep alive the small beginning of good desires which Thou Thyself hast implanted; and, above all things, grant that my conversion to Thee may be based on a profound humility. I hear Thee saying, within the secret depth of my soul, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and humble of heart;" and assuredly, of this Thy Divine humility Thou settest me an example here, especially in the Eucharist itself; for even Thy death on the Cross was but a light humiliation, in comparison with Thy Presence in this sinful heart. Oh, whither shall I go to abase myself before

Thee! Annihilation itself is not enough for one who has a thousand times deserved to be swallowed up in the eternal abyss.

Hope.

Take courage, O my soul! why should thoughts of fear arise within thee? Does not faith declare to thee that Jesus is in the depth of thy being; Jesus, thy Saviour; Jesus, the God of Mercy, yea, rather, Mercy itself? O sweet Jesus! O most kind and compassionate Saviour! and hast Thou not said to me, "I am thy salvation?" Be not cast down, then, O my soul! put thy trust in thy Saviour! set no bounds to thy confidence in Him. The Heart of Jesus is thine; thou livest in the Heart of Jesus; secure in that holy Sanctuary, what hast thou to fear? However great thy faults—however multiplied thy sins, the love of Jesus is greater, and His merits are infinite. Yet, if thou still feel some lingering distrust of thyself, fix thine eyes on the Cross. Seest thou not Mary at its foot? Oh, fly to her maternal heart, and take fresh courage! He whom she protects shall never perish.

Contrition.

O my Jesus! Thou hast been pleased, in the excess of Thy goodness, to diffuse Thy

grace within me, by the gift of Thine own Self; but not on this account shall I cease bewailing my sins before Thee. Rather I would lament continually that I have so often offended Thee and abused Thy graces. The remembrance of it will be my grief as long as I live.

But is it possible I should feel grief while in possession of Him who is the Sovereign Good of all His creatures? Yes, it is very possible. The more I enjoy Thy presence, O my God! and feel Thy goodness, the more must I needs be afflicted for having so long outraged and disowned Thee, by loving other objects than Thyself with a love due to Thee alone; by living for others more than for Thee, to whom I owe my existence from moment to moment; by breaking those sacred promises which bound me to Thy service; and by so ungratefully responding to Thy ever renewed mercies. But wherefore speak of my iniquities? My whole life is known unto Thee. O God of mercies! where canst Thou find a fitter object for Thy compassion than my poor guilty soul? O my Saviour! Thou hast been knocking at the door of my poor heart; Thou wast desirous of entering. Lo! Thou art now within it. Leave it not, I beseech Thee. Vouchsafe to establish Thyself therein, and to reign with

sovereign sway. Change it by Thy Presence; sanctify it by Thy grace; and consecrate it to Thy love; so that it may become the temple of Thy glory. Henceforth I choose Thee for my sole Lord and King. I desire to profit effectually by Thy holy Presence within me; to be faithful to Thy grace; and to return Thee love for love. Assist my weakness, O Lord! and make me for ever Thine.

Love.

O Jesus! O divine Saviour of my soul! where can I find words to express my gratitude? Enlightened by faith, this is the time when, if ever, I ought to be all on fire with love for Thee. Thou knowest the intense need which I have ever felt of loving; and here it is open to me to love without measure. Thou knowest the intense desire to be loved which has ever possessed this poor heart of mine; and here I find a heart which loves me to excess, yea, rather, which loves me *infinitely*. Weigh well, my soul, this blessed truth, and endeavour to feel its ineffable sweetness. *Thou art loved infinitely*, and by whom? By Jesus Christ Himself, by the most perfect of beings, by the most lovely, the most loving, the most worthy of love; by that God who sustains thee in existence, and is the source

of all thy blessings. Oh, my God ! my Saviour ! my Jesus ! Thou art my whole good, my treasure, my life. I desire to value nought but Thee ; I desire never again to give my heart to aught but Thyself ; I desire from this time to live only in Thee and for Thee. Now that Thou art within my heart, O my God ! give it, I beseech Thee, a distaste for all things else. Shew it the vanity, the nothingness, of everything that is not Thee. Oh, that I might love Thee as much as Thou canst be loved on earth ! O love, divine love ! fill my whole heart, and absorb all the faculties of my soul ; so that, as from Jesus I draw my life and breath, I may henceforth live and breathe for Him only. This is all I ask—to love Him as much as I am capable of loving, and to love Him unceasingly for ever.

Thanksgiving, Oblation.

In what manner, O Lord ! can I testify to Thee my gratitude ? Faith reveals to me that I receive in holy Communion benefits which it is beyond the heart of man to comprehend. Just now I was desiring Thy Presence—and behold, I possess Thee ! I was desiring consolation—and behold, Thou Thyself, the source of all happiness, art within me. I yearned for the moment that was to unite me to Thee

—I am now made one with Thee. I burned with impatience—and lo ! all my wishes have been fulfilled, accomplished, exceeded. My God is within me ! What can I give Him in return for such graces ? God unites Himself to his poor creature ! The INFINITE gives Himself to *me* ! Weak, miserable, and finite as I am, what return can I make ? I give Thee, O my God ! my heart, which, small as it is, is capable, nevertheless, of loving an Infinite Being. I give Thee my mind, which, limited as it is, is capable, nevertheless, of acknowledging an Infinite Being. Yes, my Saviour ! I here lay my reason at Thy feet ; I fully submit to the yoke of faith ; and, together with my heart, I make an entire sacrifice of it to Thee. All my being is Thine. I should be ashamed to retain anything of my own, whilst Thou, O Lord ! givest me Thy whole Self. All is Thine, O Jesus ! all is Thine. The only use I desire to make of my liberty is, to strip myself of it altogether, and to submit it entirely and absolutely to Thy love. My life, my heart, my will, my thoughts, my words, my deeds, my desires, my dearest affections—all these I place at Thy disposal ; and, from this time forward, O my King and my God ! all that I undertake shall be directed by a desire to please Thee, and to advance Thy glory.

Petition.

Oh, that I could pray to Thee, Lord, as I ought! It is here especially that I feel the need of Thy grace. Vouchsafe me this divine gift. Faith assures me that Thou grantest all things to prayer; and I possess Thee now in the depth of my heart, ready to hear and answer my petitions. I entreat Thee, then, O my divine Saviour! to strengthen those good resolutions with which Thy grace has inspired me. I know that true love consists not merely in feelings and words, but in acts. Give me grace, then, to prove by my deeds that my conversion is sincere, and that I desire to live for Thee only. Vouchsafe to confer on me those virtues of which I stand in need; a spirit of faith which shall never forsake me; a confidence which nothing shall be able to shake; a charity enkindled by Thine own; a profound humility; an entire detachment from creatures; constancy in Thy service; and a most tender and special devotion to Thy divine heart, O my Saviour! and to that of Mary, Thy most holy Mother, and my mother also. Give me grace to approach Thy divine Sacraments at all times with unfeigned piety; to come to the Sacrament of Penance with faith, confidence, and contrition; and to draw nigh Thy Holy Table with a

faith inflamed by love, with the deepest humility, and with a heart hungering after that Bread which is the delight of the soul. Lord, Thou knowest all that is most necessary for me; into the hands of Thy compassion I commit myself for time and eternity.

Vouchsafe also, O my Jesus! to cast an eye of mercy upon — and —; upon all my family; upon those of its members who are estranged from Thee; on those who are seeking to return to Thee; on those who are striving to serve Thee; on my friends, and on all who have requested my prayers. Look favourably on the Church, on our holy Father the Pope, on all Bishops and Priests, and especially those of this country; on all who know Thee; on all who know Thee not. I place all my petitions under the protection of Mary, my good and tender mother. O Mary! O Virgin most faithful! pray for me, pray for all.

Endeavour to keep alive in your soul throughout the day the recollection of your having communicated. Cherish a sense of God's Presence, and strive to live by faith. It is thus the Saints acted.

Remember, that in order to draw from the adorable Sacrament all those benefits which it is calculated to confer, a spirit of faith is absolutely necessary, as well before, and at the time, as afterwards. Hence the importance of using every effort to maintain this spirit in the soul. Earnestly entreat the Lord to increase in you this divine gift.

O august Sacrament of the Altar! thine

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it is to give me a spirit of faith—faith to pierce the veil under which Jesus conceals Himself, in order that He may approach us—faith to taste how sweet the Lord is;—such a faith as inspired St. Francis of Sales, when he exclaimed, “ Lord, annihilate me; change me into Thyself !”

Fourth Exercise

FOR COMMUNION.

Preparatory Reflections.

Now that you are about to communicate, the first thing necessary is, to banish all inordinate fear. Even veneration itself, which can never be too great, yet, if it be the sole feeling allowed to occupy the heart, to the exclusion of every other, will rather forbid than encourage us to approach the sovereign Majesty of that great God, "whose name is Holy and Terrible." If, indeed, like Moses at the sight of the burning bush, we heard only those words, "*Come not nigh hither,*" then with reason we might tremble. But, on the contrary, we hear instead the sweet voice of our Saviour saying to us, "*Come.*" It is true, He is still the God of Sinai; but the aspect under which He now presents Himself before us is no longer so terrible as of old. Far otherwise. It is under a very different image that we are now permitted to contemplate Him. Behold a Father—the best of fathers—exhibiting to

His child a heart full of tenderness, and opening to him a bosom ready to fold him in its embrace.—Such is thy God.—Listen to the voice which, from the recesses of yonder Tabernacle, sweetly calls thee, “My daughter, come unto Me. My daughter give Me thy heart.” Harken to that blessed Spouse, who has no affection but for His Bride, who is ever sacrificing Himself for her, who gives her all that He has, and all that He is. Harken to those words, which, coming as they do from the Heart of Jesus, ought to penetrate thy own, “Open to Me, my sister, my love, my dove.” Reflect that it is thy God who knocks. Is not this enough to awaken in thy heart an unlimited confidence?

BEFORE COMMUNION.

Confidence.

As we began the former exercise with Faith, so here let Confidence be the key-note, so to say, of our meditations; and to stir up this confidence within thee, what needest thou, O my soul! but to ponder on the goodness of thy God? Consider, then, what else but His goodness, in the first place, sought thee out in the abyss of nothingness, in order

to give thee existence? And, again, when thou hadst entered this world, what but His goodness adopted thee in holy Baptism, and thus gave thee life a second time? Is it not thy God who says, "Though a mother forget her sucking child, yet will not I forget thee?" Review, one by one, the Mysteries of our divine Religion, and what wilt thou discover in all of them but a goodness truly ineffable? But on coming to that Mystery which at present engages us, then, indeed, thou wilt be transported with inexpressible astonishment at the mercies which it comprises. How glorious, how enrapturing is this our belief in a God who unites Himself to us in so wonderful a manner! What a truly incomprehensible goodness must that be, which has devised and executed so sublime a scheme! And if the marvels which it contains startle and confound the intellect, this very circumstance is an acknowledgment that the human mind of itself could never have conceived such a mystery, and thus becomes an additional confirmation of our faith in it.

Yes, my God, I believe, by Thy grace, in this mystery of Thine ineffable goodness; and I beseech Thee to strengthen and increase in me this faith, which in itself is one of Thy mercies. I consign myself unreservedly to Thy tender compassion. I believe in its im-

measurable extent; and, full of the tenderest confidence, I draw nigh unto Thee. I acknowledge Thee for my God, my Creator, my Lord, my King, the Most High, the Almighty, the God thrice Holy and thrice Terrible! But whilst I behold in Thee these dread attributes, at the same time, and above all, I contemplate thee, O blessed thought! as my Saviour, my Brother, my Friend, my Spouse. Oh, how sweet are these titles to my heart! How transporting to the soul which comes to receive Thee! With my whole mind, then, and with all my strength, I believe that Thou art present in the divine Eucharist, and that I am about to receive my Saviour Himself.

Adoration.

I adore Thy sublime goodness, O my God! Of all Thy attributes, this it is that especially exhibits itself in this Mystery; and if the consideration of it excites my confidence, not the less, on that account, do I abase myself before Thy incomprehensible mercy. Consider, O my soul! all that thou hast, all that thou art. Does not all flow from Thy God's goodness? and dost not thou owe Him homage for these His benefits? What hast thou of thyself? Thou hast nothing—thou art

nothing. O God! O all-bounteous God! it is from Thee that I have received everything I possess, and unto Thee I offer it. I give Thee back all that Thou hast given me. I annihilate myself in Thy sacred Presence. I bless Thee: I adore Thee. Above all, I adore Thee in this Sacrament, wherein Thou dwellest of Thy free goodness; and the more Thou concealest Thy Majesty, so much the more do I desire to abase myself before Thee, and to sink into my own nothingness, acknowledging Thee only for my Lord and my God.

Humility.

The majesty of thy God reminds thee, O my soul! of thine own littleness. And oh, that this were all!—but, alas! what has my life been? Has it not been a life of sin also? It is too true; and here especially I have need of confidence; here, too, blessed be God, my support becomes stronger in proportion as my misery is more complete. Lord, it is impossible for me to know with certainty what I am in Thy sight (and this again is one of Thy mercies, for the knowledge would be more than I could bear); but I know enough of myself to make me stay away for ever from Thy holy table, did I not keep in mind all that Thou hast vouchsafed to declare, in order

to induce even the most sinful to approach Thee. "They that are whole need not the physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the just, but sinners to penance." It is to "the heavy laden," and to "the wearied," that Thou sayest "Come." O goodness of my God! how truly divine art Thou! Yes, notwithstanding what I know of my unworthiness, of my original sinfulness, of my nothingness, of my misery, of my whole life spent in offending Thee, notwithstanding all that might well keep me for ever away from the Feast of the Elect, from the Bread of Heaven, from the Food of Angels, still I come—Lord, I come to Thee, crying out from the depth of my soul, *Domine, non sum dignus*. Not only am I unworthy of sitting at the table of Thy children, but no human being was ever so utterly unworthy as myself. All this is true. But then, again, no human being has experienced, more than I have, the excess of Thy compassions; and, therefore it is I cry out, *Sed tantum dic verbo*; "Speak but the word, and my soul shall be healed." Yes, Lord, a single word of Thine is enough. With a word Thou didst create the world from nothing; with a word light sprang forth; with a word the stone becomes a child of Abraham. "Speak, then, but the word," O God of mercies! "and my soul shall be

healed." *Sanabitur anima mea.* It shall be healed; it shall be cleansed; it shall be purified; it shall be created anew; it shall be adorned with all that is pleasing in Thy sight. In this confidence I draw near to Thee.

Hope.

Filled, O my soul! as thou art, with the sweet thought of thy God's goodness, it is but natural thou shouldst entertain hope. But on what wilt thou build thy hope? Wouldst thou forget thy former life? wouldst thou forget thy many sins, omissions, and negligences? Ah, no! Never forget them; for it is through them that thy Saviour has been led to display in thy behalf the greatness of His mercies. What better claim have we on His compassion than the absolute need in which we stand of it? And where can we better confide than in the free mercy of our God? Did I not know the excess of His goodness to be truly infinite, despair, a frightful despair, would have been my portion long since. But have I not heard Him say, "He that hopeth in Me shall never be put to confusion?" and, again, "O Israel! trust thou in thy God?" And does not David exclaim unceasingly, "In thee, O Lord! have I hoped;" "he that hopeth in Thee shall never be deceived?"

Therefore I also cry out and say, *In te, Domine, speravi.* Yes; my trust is in my God. Take courage, O my soul! we are going unto Him who is *our hope*. We are going to be united with Him. We are going to possess Him. O my God! I offer thee my Saviour. I offer Thee His precious Blood, which He gives me; and, after all this, shall I not hope? shall I not hope without bounds? Yes, Lord, I hope—I hope all things, while drawing nigh to my Saviour. O Jesus! O my Jesus! Thy very name would be enough to revive my confidence, did it happen at any time to waver. O Mary! O my mother! my refuge! my life! O thou who, next to Jesus, art my dearest hope, *Vita dulcedo et spes nostra*, pray for me, and I shall fear nothing!

Contrition.

Lord, Thou knowest, Thou hast seen, Thou hast fully reckoned, all my sins. Thou knowest them far better than I know them myself. Thou knowest also the abuse to which I have turned Thy divine gifts—my heart, my soul, my mind, my entire being, with all its faculties. And when I consider this Thy infinite knowledge, can I avoid being filled with terror, and crushed to the

dust by my sense of it? Can I again feel confidence after a life so misspent? Yes, my soul, thou canst, thou canst! It is in thy power, it is even thy duty, to feel confidence in thy God. He Himself commands it. Jesus embraced Judas, and called him His "friend." He desired to have his confidence, and was ready to have pardoned him. But Judas believed his crime to be greater than the goodness of his God. Beware of his example. Deem not that man can attain to the infinite, even in wickedness. The goodness of God surpasses the guilt of the whole human race, and there is no sin which the blood of Jesus cannot efface. Take courage, then, O my repentant soul! at the sight of thy sins; take courage even from the very fact that thy sins are great; for so much the better will they serve to exhibit the immensity of God's mercy. But, while doing so, let the contemplation of His infinite goodness excite, at the same time, thy heartfelt sorrow. What! shall fear alone create in us a horror of sin? Cannot the heart be filled even to overflowing with the bitterest anguish—can it not be broken with grief—by reflecting on the excess of that divine goodness against which it has so grievously offended?

O my God and Father! this is the very reflection that crushes my poor heart, and rends

my soul. The consideration of Thy loving compassion makes me feel the extent of my sins a thousand times more than does the sense of the terrible chastisement which they deserve. I cannot comprehend how Thou hast been able to bear with me for so long a time, to wait for me, to call me back to Thee; and, what is still more, to humble Thyself so far as to make, if it may be said, *the first advance* to reconciliation. How long did I refuse to be Thine, yet all the time Thou wast unceasingly calling me. In vain should I attempt to recount Thy mercies; they have been innumerable, they have been infinite, and they are ineffable, as is Thy love itself; nevertheless I shall think of them without ceasing, that my repentance may be unceasing also. My God, vouchsafe to pardon me. O Jesus! I am about to receive Thee; and here, in this holy sanctuary, Thou art continually waiting for me, even Thou, my God, whom I have so grievously offended.

Suffer me, O my Saviour! to linger a little while at Thy feet, at the foot of Thy Cross, before I draw nigh to the holy Altar.

God of all holiness, and can it be that Thou art coming to *me*? *Tu mihi*! Oh! for Thy divine mercy's sake, wash my soul in Thy blood; renew it, revivify it. Have mercy on **me**, O God! have mercy on me! Come, and

reign for ever in my heart; that heart so guilty, but which, from this time forward, renounces all things, in order to belong to Thee alone. Grant, I beseech Thee, that it may cease to beat rather than continue any longer separated from Thee, or forgetful of thy Presence. Yes; I would choose death itself in preference to the misery of offending Thee any more. Come, then, O my God! come and confirm in me what Thou hast already in Thy mercy begun.

Love.

My soul, knowest thou what it is to love? Thou knowest: and what, then, is the love which thou oughtest to feel towards the sovereign and supreme Goodness? Ah! can there be a heart which will not be inflamed with love in contemplating the God of all love? Take confidence, O my soul! Thou hast a God who loves thee. Oh, ecstatic thought! to be loved by my God! to be loved infinitely! It is more than my weakness can bear; and almost do I feel tempted to exclaim, with one of the Saints, *Satis est*—"It is enough, Lord, it is enough." Thy consolations are too much for me. My weak heart cannot sustain so many graces, and still less can it correspond with them.

The Tabernacle is about to be opened; I shall soon behold my Saviour; I shall behold Love Himself.—He draws near.—Prepare thyself, my heart, to receive the source and essence of all love. Did I not know, O my God! the greatness of Thy mercy, never could I dare to present myself before Thee. But, knowing it as I do, I come with confidence. Banish from my heart, I beseech Thee, every other feeling but that of love only; let it love nought but Thee, O Jesus! O my sole good and treasure! may it be entirely and for ever thine.

Desire.

As he who loves not the God of all love may be truly considered to have no heart, so too we can say no less of him who lives without any desire of being united to that sovereign Goodness, which is ever ready to pour itself infinitely into the soul that opens herself to receive it. Assuredly it is impossible to know anything of our Saviour's ineffable goodness, without ardently longing to be united to Him. Love aims at union with the object beloved; and, as this is true in the case of earthly affections, so is it infinitely more true in respect of that love which alone properly deserves the name, that is to say, divine love.

If earthly objects attract us to them by their loveliness, which is often merely apparent, and not real, how much more ought our desires to be excited towards the Supreme Being Himself, the infinite Source of all perfection! If perishable and transitory things fascinate us, how much more ought we to be allured by that beauty which is eternal and always new! Now, with this all-perfect, with this

eternal Goodness, it is in our power to become united if we will ; and shall we not, then, make this the supreme end and object of all our desires ? That we refuse to do so can only be explained by our want of faith.

Lord, let it not be so with me. Illuminated by Thy light, emboldened by Thy mercy, and hearing only those blessed words, “Come, come”—*Venite, venite*—I desire most ardently to approach Thee. I sigh for the moment which will unite me to Thee. I hasten to meet Thee on Thy way to me. O Jesus, I desire nought else in the world but Thee ! “Come, come.” Thou art my whole good, my only good, my Well-beloved, my Saviour, my Jesus—come, and make no longer delay ; come, and never quit me more.

The above acts concluded, you will do best to leave the heart to itself, and to let it take its own course. Devout affections are better than words ; and where will the soul find a sublimer and more elevating subject of contemplation than here, in the thought that Jesus Christ Himself is Personally coming to her ?

AFTER COMMUNION.

If you were filled with the sweetest confidence while reflecting on your Saviour's desire to unite Himself to you, what will be your feelings now that He is actually present in your heart ! True it is, weak man cannot comprehend

this mysterious Presence, but at least he can feel it. Listen, then, to that still voice, which whispers in the very depths of your being, "I am thy Saviour, I am thy Salvation. *Salus tua ego sum.* Fear nought, my daughter, I am with thee, within thee, *thine.*" O infinite happiness ! O supreme felicity ! O most pure and holy delight ! Not even the well-beloved disciple himself was more blessed than you ; like him, you repose on the bosom of your Father and your God, and the heart of Jesus is united to your own.

Confidence.

How full of wonder is this divine mystery ! and, at the same time, how reassuring to the soul ! Faith tells me, and I believe it so to be : " Within thee is thy Creator and thy Lord, thy Judge, thy Almighty God, the just Avenger of crime, the Searcher of the reins and of the heart. Yes ; the majesty of the Most High, the Lord thrice Holy, is now inhabiting the innermost recesses of thy being." So faith declares to me ; and well might I be terrified at the announcement, but that sweet hope draws near and adds, " Be of good cheer, my daughter : thy Creator and Lord has become thy Saviour and thy Redeemer ; thy Judge has become thy Mediator and thine Advocate ; thy Almighty God has for thy sake humbled Himself to the helplessness of infancy, and to the poverty of a manger ; the Avenger of crime has undertaken in His own Person to make satisfaction

for the sins of the world, and for thine own in particular; the Searcher of hearts is searching thine own, with no other desire but that He may discover in it a true repentance; and the Majesty of the Most High, the Lord thrice Holy, has become man, and conceals here His greatness and His holiness, in order that He may unite Himself to thy weakness, and change it into His own divine strength."

Thus it comes to pass, that, so far from being terrified, I feel reassured, and learn to rest with entire confidence on the infinite clemency and ineffable compassion of that God whom I possess within me. Give thyself up, O my soul! to these consoling reflections. Farewell to distrust; farewell to fear; admire and bless the heavenly goodness of thy God, and never again affront it by believing it inferior to thine own guilt.

Adoration.

Adore, my soul, the divine goodness—adore the boundless mercy of thy Redeemer. But a short time since thou wast worshipping thy Saviour present upon the holy Altar; He is now in the centre of thy being. O eternal Lord! how can I sufficiently abase myself before Thee, when I consider to what an extent Thou hast carried Thy self-abasement for me,

in Thy incomprehensible charity! To raise human nature to the heavenly heights does not appear so difficult after Thy Incarnation; but that Thou shouldest give Thyself up to one who has been so guilty, and who is still so little Thine, oh, this is an inconceivable stretch of Thy goodness! Enlarge Thou my heart to feel it. Oh, that my whole life might be one uninterrupted act of adoration! Henceforth I consecrate to Thee every breath I draw; henceforth I desire that every pulsation of my being may unceasingly repeat *Sanctus! sanctus! sanctus!* "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Hosts! Heaven and earth are full of the majesty of Thy glory."

Humility.

Lord, what am I that I should receive Thee? Know I not that, could I behold Thee as Thou art, I should instantly perish, unable to support the blaze of Thy holiness! Even as it is, the faint rays of Thy glory, which Thy mercy permits me to behold, are enough to confound me utterly. O great God! God of all holiness and infinite perfection! and can it be that Thou comest from Heaven to enter this miserable heart? Hast Thou, then, forgotten my former life? True it is I was created for Thee, and formed

after Thy likeness; but, alas! hardly canst Thou now recognize in me the workmanship of Thine own hands. Thy heavenly image has faded away within me, and scarcely can it be discovered even by that Almighty glance which pierces earth and heaven. Woe is me! all has been disfigured, corrupted, destroyed. A dreadful deformity has taken the place of whatsoever beauty my soul once possessed. Thine enemy has had possession of me, and held dominion over me, and everywhere Thou beholdest the traces of his power. Alas! what can I do but throw myself at Thy feet, and exclaim, "O all merciful Redeemer, O good and blessed Shepherd, I have strayed far from Thee; and was well nigh lost! Have pity on me!" "Poor sheep," Thou repliest, "come hither, and if thou canst not walk I will carry thee; if thou art sick, I will heal thee. Come hither, that I may bring thee back to the fold. Have I not given thee My heart? See, it is open to receive thee. Enter, thou lost one, and take breath. Hell itself was not sufficient to expiate thy sins, yet, nevertheless, the heart of thy Jesus is offered thee. He opens it to thee as a place of rest. Learn to regard it as such, and betake thee with haste to this adorable refuge, bringing with thee all thy miseries; for is it not the source and centre of every mercy?

If the just man draws nigh to it with a confidence inspired by mercies already received, let the sinner remember that, for himself in particular, the Blood of this sacred Heart was shed."

O Jesus! how merciful are Thy words! Thy goodness surpasses my unworthiness. Henceforth I give myself up to Thee without reserve, and throw myself upon the bosom of Thy mercy, my Redeemer and my God.

Hope.

Lord, I have hope in Thee, that Thou wilt grant me a new heart—a heart well pleasing in Thy sight; a heart formed after the divine pattern of Thine own; humble and meek as Thine was; loving Thy Father and my brethren, whom Thou vouchsafest to call *Thine*; loving everything which Thine own adorable Heart loves; loving submission, poverty, sufferings, the Cross. Oh, how happy is the soul which is called to imitate Thee in all things, to devote herself to this imitation, to live a life of sacrifices, to become a victim of expiation, of repentance, and of love! And if all are not called to this state of perfection, nevertheless it is to all that Thou sayest, "Learn of Me." O solemn words! Vouchsafe me, Lord, grace to profit by them.

I know my misery, I know my weakness. I know that, apart from Thee, I can do nothing; but to the soul that hopes in Thee, all things are easy. I have learned the vanity of every other support, and henceforward I place all my trust in Thee alone. *In Te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum.* "In Thee, O Lord! have I trusted, I shall not be confounded for ever." Oh, how sweet are these words to the soul that possesses within herself her divine Spouse, the sole Object of all her hopes! Yes, Lord, whatever may have been my past life, I have received Thee; I possess Thee; and I hope and feel certain that "I shall not be put to confusion." Thou hast given me Thy Body, Thy Blood, Thy merits, Thy whole Self; and as I, in turn, offer them to Thy Father, I feel that in them I have a ground for boundless confidence. Nay, the more I sorrow, the more will I hope, finding in Thy past mercies an unlimited pledge of mercies to come.

Gratitude, Thanksgiving, Oblation.

If the hope which I cherish is without limit, such, too, should be my gratitude. O my God! to thank Thee worthily, my own heart is insufficient; and I need such a heart as Thou bestowest on the Blessed in heaven.

What do I say? Not even with such a heart could I thank Thee worthily. To do so, my heart must become infinite like Thine own. Alas! what else can I do but acknowledge my inability to praise Thee? I am unable to thank Thee as I ought, even for the very least of Thy benefits; and when Thou givest me Thyself, O Sovereign Good! what can I possibly render Thee in return? Shall I give Thee my heart? Alas! it is weakness itself. But let me take courage once more. Have I not Thine own heart, O my Jesus! Yes; I have Thine own Heart to offer Thee; and offering It, I may truly say that Thou art worthily repaid. This is my thanksgiving—this is my oblation.

O my sovereign Lord and Master! I give up to Thee, without reserve, my whole self. I offer Thee all that I am—all that I have; nay, rather, I have nothing remaining of my own to offer Thee. I have already given Thee all, and consecrated it to Thy service. True it is, every good—every happiness I possess—all the faculties of my soul and body—my entire being, have been Thine long since, as the Creator and Lord of all things; and still more have I made them Thine by the free choice of my will, which Thou hast vouchsafed to place in my own power. Yet, to what does all this amount at best? Ah,

Lord! it is but of Thy great mercy that Thou deignest to accept at all what we in words, which mean nothing, presume to call a *Sacrifice*. It is only when united to the Sacrifice of Jesus Thy Son, that our petty offerings can please Thee; but then, however unworthy they may be in themselves, Thou art well pleased to receive them. Accept, then, I beseech Thee, what I now offer; accept this heart of mine; and, miserable as it is in itself, may the adorable heart of Jesus give it a value in Thy sight.

Love, Petition, Resolution.

I have but just returned from uniting my heart to that divine Heart which is the source and fountain of all love. Now, therefore, if ever, it should glow with celestial flames. Now, if ever, it should be enkindled with that sacred fire which Jesus came to bring upon earth. And what is there that can better inspire me with love, O my Jesus! than the thought of Thy mercies, and a confidence in Thine infinite goodness! Without this confidence, poor miserable sinners that we are, never could we find sufficient boldness to say to God, "I love Thee; Thou knowest that I love Thee."

Alas! do we sufficiently reflect upon the divine happiness which we possess in being

permitted thus to address our God? A servant dares not say to his master, "I love you." A subject dares not speak thus to his king. Even a dutiful son, in addressing his father with these words, feels a kind of timidity. Yet our heavenly Father—our sovereign Master—the King of kings—the Almighty God authorizes His creatures—permits them—nay commands them not only to feel love towards Him, but to express it without reserve.

O my God! my Jesus! my whole Good! my Life! my Love! Thou knowest the necessity of loving under which this heart suffers; but can it be permitted to such as I am, to love Thy infinite Majesty? Yes; Thou commandest it, and I must do so. Nay, hast Thou not filled me with Love itself, in vouchsafing to me Thy divine Presence? Oh, then, grant me grace to love Thee with all the ardour of my soul! Rejoice, my heart—enlarge thyself. He whom thou lovest deserves to be loved without measure. Love, then—love thy Saviour to the utmost reach of thy faculties. Love Him transportingly, and live only for His love.

O Jesus! to love Thee is supreme felicity! O Thou who didst first love us, and camest on earth to prove it to us, as by Thy other acts, so especially in the Sacrament of Thy love; filled with confidence I come before

Thee, entreating of Thee grace to love Thee alone; and, since Thou givest Thine own Self to me, it is my hope that I shall obtain my prayer. What, indeed, canst Thou refuse to that soul which possesses Thyself? What grace wilt Thou not give where Thou hast already bestowed Thine own Flesh and Blood? Yes; my sole petition is, that I may love Thee. Thy love alone is sufficient for me, as comprising within itself every other gift, every virtue, every good. If I but truly love Thee, nothing else will be wanting; for then I shall love all that Thou lovest; then I shall, on all occasions, follow Thy divine example: then I shall live conformably to Thy law in all things: poverty will be my wealth, submission my choice, suffering and mortification my delight; in Thy humiliation will be my only glory, in Thy merits my only treasure, and in dying to all that is not Thee, my only life. My God, give to others the goods of this world, its riches, its honors, its pleasures; as for me, I ask none of these things; I only ask Thyself. Too long have I loved creatures; henceforth I desire to love Thee only. Too long have I forgotten Thee for them; henceforth I desire to forget all for Thee. Henceforth may God alone be in my mind, my spirit, my thoughts, my heart, my affections, God alone everywhere, and for ever!

Vouchsafe, Lord, to bless this resolution, inasmuch as Thou only, by Thy grace, canst enable me to execute it.

Instructed by Thy goodness, I implore likewise Thy mercy, O Lord! not only for myself, but for all men, for the Catholic Church, for this country—for the Catholic Church in this country. I entreat Thee to bless my family, my friends, and all who have asked my prayers; I entreat Thee, especially, in behalf of those who have assisted me in returning to Thee. O my God! Thou knowest all my desires; my heart lies open before Thee; grant to these dear friends Thy true blessings, and return them an hundredfold for all their charity. I beseech Thee, moreover, to pour Thy especial grace upon all who have been consecrated to the office of saving souls for Thee. Shed upon them the abundance of Thy gifts. Crush the efforts made by impiety to destroy the fruits of their zeal. Touch the hearts of those who persecute and calumniate them; and unite all men in the one blessed task of loving Thee and serving Thee.

For myself, I consecrate my heart for ever to Thy love; and I enjoy the sweet hope that, having loved Thee here upon earth to my latest breath, I shall go to love Thee in Heaven to all eternity. All my petitions I place

under the protection of Mary my good Mother. Through her sacred Heart I offer them to Thee, O Jesus! and through her I hope to reach Thee. O divine Mother! art thou not "our hope?" *spes nostra*. Art thou not the "Mother of holy hope?" *Mater sanctæ spei*; art thou not invoked under the sweet title of "our Lady of hope?" Obtain for me, then, I beseech thee, all those graces which follow upon a good and holy Communion; pray that I may gather abundant fruit from this Communion, and pray that I may abide for ever in the Heart of Jesus, in union with thy maternal Heart, to which I unite my own for time and eternity.

The impressions excited within us by considerations such as the above, of God's infinite goodness and love, manifested to us in the holy Eucharist, should not be confined to the day of Communion; we should cherish them diligently, and endeavour to engrave them for ever on our hearts. Grant us, Lord, such a disposition; grant us the knowledge of Thy commandments, and grant us grace to practise them.

Fifth Exercise

FOR COMMUNION.

BEFORE COMMUNION.

Preparation—Love.

As faith and confidence have formed the principal groundwork of the two preceding exercises, so let us especially dedicate this last to love. The divine Eucharist is not only a Mystery of faith, and a certain pledge of hope, but it is likewise pre-eminently the Sacrament of love. We cannot imagine a stronger proof of love than that which our Lord has given us in this Mystery; and we may be sure, that nothing short of Divine love itself could have either devised or effected so marvellous a scheme.

What sweet feelings should occupy our hearts, and penetrate their inmost depth, while we meditate upon the love of Jesus, as exhibited to us in the holy Eucharist! Come, then, O my soul! and let us run to meet our Saviour. "Behold, the Bridegroom cometh!" *Ecce Sponsus venit!* Let us go forth to meet Him; let us make haste, and throw ourselves at the feet of Him who is hastening to embrace

us. Rejoice, my soul, and be glad. We are about to join the assembly of the Saints in the house of our Father, in the city of our Lord and our God. *Lætatus sum ; in domum Domini ibimus.* We have been invited to the Feast of the Elect ; we are going to sit at the Table of Angels. The Bread of Heaven will be given us ; we shall taste of the true Manna ; we shall be fed on the finest flour of wheat ; we shall drink that divine Wine which is the delight of pure hearts and chosen souls.

I am within Thy Temple, O my God ! and scarcely have I set foot therein, than there has come over me a feeling of ineffable peace ; already I taste a divine sweetness, and breathe a strange perfume of love. Everything here speaks to me of love—of that love which Thou hast for man ; of that love which man should have for Thee. As I enter I behold the hallowed Font, in whose precious stream Thy love bestows upon us the gift of innocence, and adopts us for Thy children. A few steps further, and my eye rests on those august Tribunals, at which Thy loving mercy restores purity and peace of heart to the repentant soul ; and further on still, the sacred Pulpit meets my gaze—that solemn spot, from whence issue so many holy words, uttered in Thy name, to kindle the divine fire which Thou camest to bring upon earth.

Yet, a few paces more, and there rises before me the Image of that blessed Mother, whom Thy love has given us, “the Mother of fair love; *Mater pulchræ dilectionis*. Hardly do I dare advance; but, encouraged by her compassionate looks, I proceed to the steps of the Sanctuary. I raise my eyes, and what do I behold?—Thy most holy Cross! Ah! now I know how great is the love of God for man. But no; even beyond the Cross hast Thou carried Thy divine charity. My gaze rests on the Tabernacle. I inquire who dwells therein, and faith replies, JESUS. Yes, Jesus, the Saviour of the world; Jesus, the Word of God; Jesus, God and man; Jesus, radiant in the blaze of divine glory, humbles Himself here for our sakes, even to the form of Bread; Jesus, the Lord of earth and heaven, before whom every knee bows, and all grandeur and majesty disappears; Jesus, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, the Most High, the Infinite, the Eternal—Jesus is here! My inmost heart bears witness to His Presence. O my soul! let us pause awhile, and contemplate in silence the God of the Eucharist.

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Faith.

How strange is this! The sublimest sentiments penetrate my soul, and fill it with rapture! Yet, in spite of all this, the senses and the reason cry out and murmur. They demand to see; they demand to comprehend. To see what? the Invisible;—to comprehend what? the Incomprehensible.

Well, O my senses! and you shall be satisfied. True it is, mine eyes cannot see this Mystery; neither can my hands touch it; but my ears may hear the words of Jesus Himself, declaring—"This is My Body; this is My Blood. The Bread that I will give is My Flesh for the life of the world. I am the Bread of life." Such are the words of Jesus; my ear receives them; my heart believes, and cries out, "He is here! Jesus is here! Jesus Himself."

Thou too, O my reason! what is it thou askest? To comprehend?—to comprehend the Infinite? Well, then, become God; for to comprehend Him thou must be such as He is. Ah! were our reason truly enlightened, it would find in this Mystery more than enough to satisfy it; and would, of its own accord, conduct us to faith. It would perceive the necessity of some Intelligence superior to its own; it would recognize this

Supreme Intelligence as its sovereign Lord, and would submit to it, here as elsewhere, without a murmur. Yes, my Lord, my God, my Jesus! I submit my reason before Thee; I silence its vain objections in Thy sacred Presence, and again I exclaim, "He is here!"

But how? Ah! where, then, is my faith? To ask that question is to return again to the regions of sense. Rather, let me hearken to the voice of love: love solves all difficulties. *I believe in the love of my God for me.* Does not this explain all? I believe, yes, my God, I believe that Thou Thyself, out of mere love for man, art in the divine Eucharist. "God so loved the world:" *Sic Deus dilexit mundum.* "Jesus having loved His own, who were in the world, loved them unto the end:" *Cum dilexisset suos, qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos.*

Adoration.

I believe in Thy love, O Jesus! and, annihilated in Thy Presence, fall prostrate before Thee. Would that I could abase myself more completely. O wonderful thought, that Thou shouldest conceal Thyself here beneath the rude appearance of material bread!—that, under this humble veil, Thou Thyself shouldst be truly present! Thou, the Lord of all

things! Thou, the King of kings! Thou, before whom all glory is eclipsed, and all majesty vanishes to nought! Thou, the Creator of the world! the All in All! the infinite I AM: *Ego sum qui sum!* Can we possibly comprehend so surpassing a mystery? We cannot: yet we can comprehend assuredly how profoundly we are bound to adore it.

Lord, it is but little I can say. A vile worm, had it a voice, would not dare to say to a great king, "I acknowledge my dependence on thee; I permit Thee to crush me." And what else but a worm am I in Thy sight? All that I can utter is but folly before Thee. Nevertheless, wholly as I acknowledge Thine infinite Almightyness, and my own absolute nothingness, yet, taught by Thy mercy, I dare to submit myself fully and freely to Thy good pleasure. I desire Thee to do with me what Thou wilt. I glorify Thee for Thy infinite greatness, and I sacrifice to Thee my entire being.

Humility.

O my God! when I think upon Thy infinite power and glory, hardly do I dare approach Thee. Who art Thou? and who am I? Thou, the Being of beings! the only Being who truly art! I nothing—nothingness itself; nay, there is yet a wider differ-

ence, if that were possible: Thou, the Saint of saints—I a sinner, yea, sin itself! Surely, it cannot be that I should ever be united to Thee! “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!” Come not nigh unto me; I am altogether unworthy. *Domine non sum dignus.*

Alas! my poor soul, whither art thou wandering? Hast thou, then, forgotten that Thy God loves thee? Love fills up the interval that separates thee from Him. It brings together and reconciles all that is most distant and most opposite. Harken to the voice of thy Lord and Master saying to thee, “Come.” Harken to thy Father exclaiming, again and again, “My child, draw hither.” Harken to the Bridegroom calling thee, “Come, My sister, My friend, My well-beloved, come to Me.” O Jesus! O my Lord, my Father, my Spouse! and must I obey? and dost Thou command me to receive Thee? Thou, so infinite, so holy!—I, so wretched and so guilty! Can it be that Thou desirest to come to me? *Tu mihi!*

I hear Thee reply: “Zaccheus,” Thou sayest, “come down, for I must abide in thy house.” Be astonished, O my soul! Thy God humbles Himself so far as even to call thee by thy name. “N.,” he says, “come down and humble thyself, for never canst thou place

thyself too low ; thou who hast deserved to be trodden under foot by devils. Come down, casting away all pride ; and after thou hast come down ‘I must abide in thy house.’” Thou *must* abide !—and why this necessity, Lord ? Who hath imposed it upon thee ? Who hath set Thee this law ?—Thee, the Sovereign Lord of heaven and earth !—Thee, who rulest all things !—Thee, from whom all that is holds its being ! Ah ! I comprehend—what necessitates Thee is love, and love alone. Yes, Lord, I come ; I come down to Thee, since Thou wilt have it so ; and I desire that Thou wilt abide in me, not only at this time, but for ever.

Hope.

Like Zaccheus, I come down, and hasten to my Saviour, full of confidence and joy. Jesus has called me—Love reassures me. Be of good cheer, O my soul ! be of good cheer ; salvation is come unto thee. The love of thy Jesus is an inexhaustible fountain of hope and strength. In Him alone every good gift is comprised. From Him all graces flow. Oh, that my love might be so perfect, as to cast out fear ! I look to obtain from Him every blessing. If my God gives Himself to me, what is there that He can refuse me ? Yes ; I look to obtain every blessing from His good-

ness—power to will what He wills; power to do what He commands. *Da quod jubes, et jube—quod vis!*

Contrition.

My God, I look for every blessing from Thee; yet it is too true that I deserve of Thee nought but the most terrible chastisements. I deserve to love Thee no longer. I deserve to lose the very power of loving Thee. Satan cannot love; and the same lot would be mine did I receive my desert. What, indeed, does that soul deserve, which, created by Thy hands, formed in Thine Image, endowed with Thy best gifts, and holding of Thee her life, and all that she has, nevertheless refuses Thee the heart which she owes Thee, and which she received only that she might return it to Thee? Yet this has been my own wretched state; and to think that I have thus lived will be my grief to the end of my days. My God said to me, "My daughter, I love Thee—love thou Me in return;" but I doubted His love. I refused to believe in it, even while I was depending upon it for life itself. I loved Him not. O my God! can I utter those fearful words? I loved Thee not; I loved not Love itself! Incredible folly! And all this while, what was it that I did love? I loved what Thou hatest—what deserves to be

superlatively hated—sin, Satan; everything that was evil. Oh, that it were in my power to redeem, at the price of my blood, every moment in which I have not loved Thee!—Oh, that I could offer Thee as many hearts as I have wasted moments! Alas! my poor soul, thou exhaustest thyself in vain wishes. The time is gone by; thou canst not recall the past. Yet this canst thou do: thou canst implore the mercy of thy God; thou canst offer Him the love of Jesus Christ; thou canst offer Him the heart of Jesus Christ. Ah, then, unite thine own grief to that of His most sacred and adorable Heart, and offer that Heart, so full of Divine love, to the eternal Father, and be comforted; for thy God is loved as He deserves.

Love.

O love! O divine, celestial love! come, thou and take possession of my soul: set on fire my heart; transform my entire being. If it is to love that every grace is to be ascribed; if faith, humility, confidence, contrition, derive their virtue from love alone, then what will not love itself be able to effect within me! O Jesus! too long have I loved all other objects but Thee, and thou knowest it. I have now but one desire, that of loving Thee alone. I

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made use of that heart which Thou hadst given me—I made use of it for the purpose of loving Thy works; but I loved not Thee, their Author. Great God! how can I sufficiently deplore my infatuation? How can I make reparation for it? Vouchsafe, Lord, I beseech Thee, to restore to my heart whatever capacity of loving Thee it once possessed, and to revive its former warmth. Grant it a ready disposition to sacrifice itself for Thee, and to count every sacrifice as nothing for Thy sake. O Jesus! make my heart young again; yea, rather give me a new heart, more tender, more sensitive, than ever mine was. Give me a strong, a noble, a great, a generous heart—a heart to love Thee only, O God of all loveliness! O God, who alone, among all things, art truly lovely. *Cor mundum crea in me, Deus.*

Thou alone, O my sovereign Good! Thou alone canst satisfy that desire to love which is inherent in my nature. Come then, O Love of my God! come and fill my heart with Thy Presence. Consider, my soul, what Jesus has done for thee. Consider especially His excess of love in the holy Eucharist, and give thyself up to Him without reserve.

O sweet Jesus! my treasure! my joy! my delight! my well-beloved! my sole beloved! I have no words to express the feelings within

me. My God, Thou lovest me ! Thou hast loved me from all eternity, even while I was not ; and Thou didst love me at the very time when, lost in the irregularities of a guilty life, I loved Thee not ; when I took pleasure in keeping at a distance from Thee ; when I presented to Thy sight nought but a foul mass of sin and deformity. Yes ; even then Thou wast waiting for me. Thou didst call me ; Thou didst follow after me ; Thou didst say to me unceasingly : “ Come unto me, O heavy-laden one ! bowed down beneath the weight of thy miseries, beneath the load of thy long-continued sins, come unto Me ; I see how weary thou art, and I desire to comfort thee. Ah, unhappy soul ! My enemy has seduced thee ; but although thou hast submitted to his power, thou art still dear to Me. Come, then ; it is thy God who calls thee : and be assured, that, far from finding in Him an angry Judge, ready to condemn and punish, thou wilt find in Him a Father, the tenderest of fathers, anxious to pardon and to bless.” Thus didst Thou speak to me : and shall I not love Thee, in turn, for all Thy goodness ? Thy love for me hath been a very passion : and shall not I too be impassioned in my love for Thee ; and endeavour to love Thee even to excess, were that possible ? Yes, Lord ! willingly would I die for love of Thee ; but if that be not grant-

ed me, let me at least live only to love Thee; and this I purpose to do by the help of Thy grace.

Desire.

Come, O Jesus! blessed Object of all my love! come and make no further delay. Well I know Thou desirest nothing so much as to give Thyself to the soul which burns to possess Thee. Through eighteen hundred years, I may truly say, Thou hast been waiting for me! Eighteen hundred years ago Thou didst say, "Come!" Eighteen hundred years ago Thou didst say, "With desire have I desired:" *Desiderio desideravi*; and for six thousand years, for sixty centuries past, "Thy delight has been to be with the children of men!" O Jesus! and can we then help desiring to unite ourselves with a God who is so anxious to unite Himself to us? Rather we ought to be in constant need of using all the strength of our reason, to moderate our ardour, to check the consuming flames of our love, and to prevent us from spending every moment of our time in prostrate adoration before the Tabernacle wherein Thou dwellest. O my Lord and my God! when I consider what Thy love has led Thee to do for man, I am lost in wonder and gratitude! Oh, exceeding mar-

vel! that Thou shouldest deign to conceal Thyself under such mean appearances! that Thou shouldest so infinitely abase Thyself! Let me contemplate for awhile the spot where Thou endurest to abide.

* * * *

It is there, then, within yon small space, that the Lord and God of the entire universe submits to be enclosed for my sake—there, in yonder tabernacle; and, after this, is there anything I can refuse to bear for the sake of Him who has so loved me? O my God! henceforth nothing shall be impossible to me. Love knows nothing of impossibilities. It is able to do all things; it is willing to do all things; it does and suffers all things. O Jesus! O my Saviour! O celestial joy of my soul! my life's happiness! my only life! my all! come. "As the hart pants after the fountains of water," so does my soul yearn for its supreme Good! My Jesus, teach me what Thou art in Thyself; teach me what Thou art to me. Thus to know Thee is to desire Thee,—to desire Thee inextinguishably. Come, then, and inflame my whole soul with the sacred fire of Thy love. Come; but before Thou comest, vouchsafe me all those dispositions which please Thee, and renew my heart after the pattern of Thine own, that it may be united to Thine for ever.

N 2

AFTER COMMUNION.

Gratitude—Love.

Before receiving Thee, O my God! I was absorbed in contemplating that excess of love which Thou exhibitest towards us in the divine Eucharist. I have now received Thee; and what must be the feelings of my soul, possessing, as she does, within herself the source and principle of all love, yea, Love itself?

I said, "I will go to my Father; I will enter His House, even His Holy Temple." I took courage, and passed into His sanctuary, plunging, so to say, into an atmosphere of love. Everything spoke to me of the love of my God. At every step I met with fresh memorials of it. As I gazed on the Crucifix, I imagined that I had learned the whole extent of His divine charity; but it was in the Tabernacle that I discovered its infinite depth.

Thus it was with me before I received Thee, O my God! but now, what shall I think? what shall I say? I am myself become a living tabernacle, in which the God of love dwells. He is within me. Enlarge thyself, my heart—Jesus! Jesus! the Saviour of the world! the eternal word of the Father—who was born for thee in a manger, who died for

thee on a Cross through excess of love—He Himself is now within thee! O my soul! be swallowed up in the contemplation of this ineffable prodigy, this infinite miracle of love. Follow the example of Mary Magdalene, of whom our Saviour Himself said, that she “loved much” (*dilexit multum*), and remain at the feet of Jesus. Listen in profound silence to the secret whispers of that divine voice, and treasure up all that thou hearest. Learn of Christ Himself how to love Him—how to love Him from henceforth, and for Himself alone.

Faith.

I believe in the love of my God for me. Without this belief, never, O divine Jesus! could I have conceived the possibility of Thy taking up Thy abode in the depths of this defiled heart; but love can do all things, and well may the infinite love of God surpass in its effects the limits of human intelligence. Thy own word assures me, O Jesus! that I possess Thee within the innermost recesses of my being. I ask not to see Thee.—I ask not to understand how this is. Enough that I hear Thee say, “It is I”—*Ego sum*. With the whole strength of my soul I believe in Thy love for me; I believe in this mystery of Thy divine Presence.

Adoration.

I adore Thee, O divine Jesus! concealed as Thou art within the depth of my heart. I abase myself before Thee, who humblest Thyself so exceedingly within me. If to adore is to love so deeply as to be ready to annihilate ourselves for the object beloved,—who, of all beings, deserves to be so deeply loved as Thyself, O Jesus! and for whom can we better renounce all things? How oft have I heard those divine words: “I am the Lord: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind, and with thy whole strength!” I am bound, O my God! and I know it, to love Thee with the whole intensity of my being; with all the warmth of my heart, ever desiring to please Thee; with all the understanding and bent of my mind, ever desiring to know Thee better and better; with all the powers of my soul, ever seeking to advance Thy glory; and with the whole strength of my nature, ever consecrating to Thee all my faculties, and making it my chief happiness to offer Thee the constant sacrifice of all that I have and all that I am.

Such, O my Saviour! is that adoration, “in spirit and in truth,” which Thou demandest

of us, and which Thy love alone can effect in our souls. Vouchsafe to me, I beseech Thee, the grace of thus adoring Thee to my latest breath.

Humility.—Confidence.

It was but a short time since that I said, "I am not worthy; come not unto me." Nevertheless, Thou hast come, O Lord! and at this very time Thou art within me. Oh, the ineffable prodigy of Thy love! That Thou, my God, shouldest unite Thyself to me!—That Thou shouldest visit a heart of Thine own creating; created indeed to love Thee, but which, alas! has too often refused to be Thine! That Thou, who art supreme Greatness itself, shouldest humble Thyself so infinitely for my sake!—And shall I not, then, humble myself in return? Lord, grant me this grace; grant me some portion of Thine own humility. Oh, may Thy sacred Heart, so humble and so meek, communicate to my own somewhat of its own ineffable virtue!

Know I not that it is in Thyself I behold the true pattern of that humility, which Thou desirest to find in me! It is written: "Christ pleased not Himself: *Christus non sibi placuit*. Although Thou wast Perfection itself, yet didst Thou humble Thyself to the utmost,

and become of no reputation, for man's sake ! and shall man, then, poor and little as he is, esteem himself of consequence ? Shall I, who am nothing but sin, refuse to despise myself utterly ?—shall I set no value on humiliations ? O Jesus ! would that I could share with Thee the ignominies of thy Passion ! Teach me Thy own humility. Show me to myself.

Alas ! what is it I am asking ? Is it not certain that if, in answer to my prayer, Thou shouldest enable me to behold myself as I really am in Thy sight, I should perceive myself to be so miserable, so deserving of every punishment, that I might with reason lose every shadow of hope ? It is too true ! A thousand times, O my God ! have I deserved to be deprived of the ineffable happiness of loving Thee eternally. Nevertheless, while, on the one hand, the recollection of my lengthened ingratitude fills me with grief, on the other, the very excess of my necessity urges me to dependence on Thee, and attracts the eye of Thy mercy. The humbled soul sees in herself nought but helplessness, weakness, faithlessness ; but she finds all that is good in her God ; and, resting only upon Him she exclaims : *In Te, Domine, speravi ; non confundar in æternum ;* " In Thee, O Lord ! have I trusted ; I shall not be confounded for ever." Yes, my God ! in Thee alone do I

trust. To Thee alone do I unite myself. In Thee only do I find every good in its perfect reality; in order to obtain which I only need to love Thee. Every good follows inseparably upon true love. Oh, that I may love Thee with all my soul! Oh, that I may never again be so unhappy as to offend Thee! This is my sole desire. All things else upon earth are vanity. Henceforth I give myself up to Thee, for time and eternity.

Thanksgiving.

What can I do, O my God! in order to thank Thee for all the benefits which Thy love has devised for men? How can I exhibit my gratitude to Thee, except by loving Thee as much as I am capable of? And how little is my utmost love, in comparison with Thine, which is immeasurable, incomprehensible, infinite! I am nothing; I have nothing; I can do nothing. But what do I say? O my soul! does not Jesus, in giving Himself to thee, become thy own possession? and hast thou not all things in possessing Him? Is He not all love? and has He not become thine? Understand, then, that He has entered within thee, in order that He may offer thanksgivings to His divine Father in thy stead. Thou art nothing, it is true:—but He is everything! thou

canst do nothing;—but His love can do all things! and His adorable Heart is become thine own, that thou mayest have wherewith to pay thy thanks. I thank Thee, then, O my God! I thank Thee with Thine own Self: no other thanksgiving is worthy of Thee.

Oblation.

What can I offer Thee, O my God! acknowledging, as I do, that I am weakness and misery itself? Yet, here again Thy divine love is my resource. I said in my poverty, *Quid retribuam?* “What return shall I make?” And thy love permits me to reply, *Calicem salutaris accipiam*: “I will take the Chalice of salvation.” Yes; I offer Thyself, O my Saviour! to Thy eternal Father, inasmuch as Thou hast given Thyself to me. I offer Him Thy adorable Heart; I offer Him Thy most holy Soul; I offer Him Thy sacred Body, Thy precious Blood, Thy sublime Divinity: in a word, I offer Him whatsoever glory Thou givest Him in the adorable Eucharist; and, in particular, that which Thou art now paying Him from within the depths of my heart, inasmuch as it is there that Thou art most of all abased. And suffer me, Lord, of Thy tender mercy, to unite with this offering of infinite worth, that of my whole self, mise-

nable as it is. Ah! methinks I hear Thee reply: "My child, the offering of thyself, united with that of thy Saviour, shall never be rejected by Me. The gift of thy heart, blended by the divine love of Jesus with His own, will ever be acceptable with a God who only asks love for love."

Love.

O my Jesus! now that Thou art reposing within this poor heart of mine, vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, to speak to it and instruct it. Who can teach it to love Thee except Thyself, O my Saviour! Thyself, who art essentially Love? Too long have I deceived myself, and fancied that I was seeking Thy love, while I sought only to gratify my own feelings. I desired to *feel* Thy love, as in the case of the love of creatures. I desired to be filled with a sensible sweetness. I sought myself and not Thee. Alas! how often have I thus deluded myself while preparing to receive Thee. About to receive a God who died on a Cross, my mind was bent upon transports of joy. At the sacrifice of Calvary, I looked to find the delights of Tabor. I perceived in Thy heavenly doctrines nothing of that which they really teach. I wished to die for love of Thee, yet had no thought of conforming my

life to Thy self-crucifying laws; and thus was I too often but straying from Thee anew, at the very time when I was thanking Thee for my return to the truth.

“It is the characteristic of a Nazarene,” remarks Bossuet, “that is to say, it is the characteristic of a Saint, to abstain from whatever inebriates. All that flatters and excites the senses is an obstacle to holiness. Shun the intoxication of the senses, and thou shalt be quickly filled with the Holy Ghost, and transported with celestial joy. Suffer not thyself to be fascinated by vain pleasures. Look not for this world’s joy, at the first taste of which thy relish for heavenly grace will begin to depart. Its sweetness is pernicious, and infuses into the whole being a poison which distempers the brain, and troubles it with strange disorders.”

Now, if this be the case as regards the external senses; if the mental inebriation which their indulgence occasions is incompatible with a relish for the Cross and for sufferings; ought we not to regard with some suspicion that inebriation of the heart which, under the profession of Divine love, aims in reality at pleasing self? How different from this was the conduct of the Saints? These perfect lovers of the Cross not only had in horror the sensible delights of earthly love, but even

when at times it pleased their Lord to suspend their sufferings, and to offer them instead some taste of those heavenly enjoyments which they had merited by their unbounded love of Him, they resolutely refused themselves that happiness; and when it so chanced that they could not prevent themselves from feeling those sweet paroxysms, the very pleasure which this occasioned became to them the most lively of all their sufferings, so much was their heart set upon sharing the pains and self-denials of their blessed Master.

Vouchsafe, then, O my Jesus! vouchsafe to instruct me Thyself in this divine Science. Make known to me wherein Thy love consists, and what I should do in order to acquire it. Thou repliest to me, yea, from within the inmost depth of my heart Thou makest answer: "If ye love Me, keep my commandments." Such is love—such must true love ever be. Ask thyself, O my soul! does thy love for thy God exhibit itself in this faithful observance of His law—in this entire and perfect submission to His good pleasure? Hear what the beloved disciple saith: "Let us not love in words nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth." Hast thou thus loved? Alas! no. Is it not too true that thy love, at best, has consisted of little more than overwrought expressions, imaginative feelings, and an im-

passioned sensibility, which might cause thee perchance to shed some tears of sweet emotion, but which did not lead thee on to acts of solid virtue? Deceived by a fictitious fervour, you persuaded yourself that you were seeking your God, when, in reality, you were seeking your own comfort. It is true you did not plunge into the gross pleasures of the world; but this was in order to enjoy pleasures still more fascinating; you despised material enjoyments, but then you chose in their place the delights of a subtle passion, which you mistook for the love of your God; and was there not in all this more sensuality of heart, so to say, than true charity? Ah, then, open thine eyes this day to the divine light which is granted thee; acknowledge thy blindness; learn what it is to love; look at Jesus, thy adorable pattern; listen to His precepts, and bend all thy energies towards conforming thy life to His. Too long hast thou thought, reasoned, spoken, judged, and acted as a child; too long hast thou aimed at mere enjoyment; it is time for thee to put away the things of childhood, and to love Jesus for His own sake, and not for the sensible delights which His service brings.

What is it, then, to love? is it not to act and to suffer for the beloved object? Assuredly, expressions of the tenderest sentiments,

a thousand times repeated, have not the value of one single act, or of the smallest sacrifice. Call to remembrance, O my soul ! the example of Jesus Christ. What are his first words upon entering this world ? Are they expressions of love ? Does He exclaim, " My Father, I love thee ? " No ; but he says, "*Ecce venio*, Lo, I come to do Thy will, O Lord ! " And later on He says, " My meat is, to do the will of Him that sent Me ; " and again, " My Father and I are one ; for I do always the things that please Him. " Finally, even in the midst of His agony, He exclaims, " Not as I will, but as Thou wilt : " *Non sicut ego volo, sed sicut Tu.* And what was there that Jesus did not *do*, in order to bring glory to His Father, by winning all hearts to Him ? For this end He encounters every evil. For this end He labours, He suffers, He dies.— Here is love. Compare thyself, O my soul ! with this adorable pattern, and judge, if thou hast ever truly known what it is to love. Contemplate the Heart of Jesus, that sacred Heart which is the source and centre of all love, and learn from It wherein the nature of true love consists. He desires to be baptized with a baptism of blood ; He sighs only for the cross, for pains, for humiliations, for death. He breathes nought but self-immolation. Such is His love for His divine Father

But Jesus also loves the poor children of men, and with what intensity! In order to save them, He becomes man, He becomes an infant, He empties Himself, He abases Himself, even to death, and that the death of the cross. Finally, He institutes the divine Eucharist. Does He merely say to men, "I love you?" No; he condescends to prove His love to us every moment by His acts; and His entire life was but a succession of pains and hardships encountered for our sake; so, in the adorable Sacrament of the altar, He lavishes upon us all the treasures of His love. What else is that tremendous sacrifice, so unceasingly renewed in the holy Eucharist, and of which we partake in holy Communion—what else is it but an ineffable miracle of Christ's infinite love? O sublime mystery, the depths of which human weakness cannot search into! God immolates Himself, in order to offer to the Divinity that homage which alone is perfect and truly worthy of Him! He admits men to a participation of His own sacrifice, He unites them to Himself, in order that they may be able to form a part of the sacrifice offered to the supreme Majesty! He comes, and abases Himself within us, that we may abase ourselves in turn, and be presented by Him to His Father! He renews, He multiplies, He perpetuates the sacrifice of Himself

uninterruptedly, age after age, through all parts of the world, as though He could not find a sufficient number of altars upon which to satisfy His inexhaustible love! He immolates Himself again and again within every heart that presents itself to receive Him! *O altitudo!* "Oh, the depth of the riches, of the wisdom, and of the knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgments, and how unsearchable His ways!"

Such is the love of thy God for thee, O my soul! such is the mode in which thy Saviour teaches thee what it is to love. Alas! how sad is it to think that I have had such a model set before me only to avoid it! But from this time, O divine Jesus! I will follow a different course; henceforth I will endeavour to profit by Thy teaching; and to this end will no longer suffer my love for Thee to consist merely in sweet sentiments. I will strive to imitate Thee; I will offer Thee the constant sacrifice of myself, as a proof of my love for Thee. I will labour incessantly to destroy in my soul all that can possibly displease Thee; I will resolutely combat my passions, and will endeavour to submit all that is within me to the empire of Thy grace; I will renounce myself; I will take up my cross, and carry it daily; and will follow Thee, O my Saviour! by a faithful and constant imitation of Thee.

This will be love,—true love; a love which

sets the heart on fire in order to consume and annihilate its passions, its selfishness, and even its least imperfections, for the sake of its beloved; and I clearly perceive that everything in the ineffable mystery of the Eucharist tends to inspire us with this spirit,—with the spirit, that is to say, of immolation and self-sacrifice. How, indeed, is it possible to draw near to a God who died on a Cross, seeking only for consolations and enjoyments! How can we receive that adorable Body which was so mangled with wounds, and desire only to feel delights! Let it not be so with me, let me rather seek to unite myself to my Saviour in His sufferings. Consider, my soul, what else but this has ever been the desire of those hearts which, through all ages, have burned with the most ardent love of Jesus. Mary herself stands at the foot of the Cross, gazing upon her divine Son, and partaking of His anguish. She desires not to lose one single drop of His cup of bitterness. And, like her, all the Saints, without exception, from first to last, have followed Jesus in the path of suffering. St. John the Baptist, the friend of the Bridegroom, who united the purest innocence with the severest penances, terminated both by martyrdom. If St. Peter, on Mount Tabor, exclaimed in ecstatic joy, “Lord, it is good for us to be here,” it is given as a reason, a few lines further on, that “he was beside himself, for he knew not

what he said ;” and it was at this very time that Jesus discoursed on His passion with Moses and Elias. St. Paul, after having been ravished even to the third heaven, said, “ I die daily,” *quotidie morior*. O Jesus ! O my Saviour ! I too desire to use the same language ; vouchsafe me grace to put it in practice. The same Apostle declares to us, “ As often as ye shall eat this Bread, ye shall show forth the death of the Lord.” Now, how can we show forth the death of the Lord in this mystery, if we seek in it only for its delights ? To think that we can is a deplorable delusion, very far removed from the true love of God.

Petition.

O my Saviour ! now that, in the excess of Thy love, Thou hast taken up Thy dwelling within my heart, what can I better ask of Thee than the gift of Thy love itself ? Vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, to fill with it my whole soul. Thy goodness it was that discovered to her the snares which the enemy of all virtue was laying for her, by falsely colouring her own subtle self-love, until she mistook it for the love of Thee. Delivered from this illusion by Thy grace, she now acknowledges her error ; she groans, she sighs, she abases herself before Thee. My God, forgive me, and grant an entire change to this poor heart ; grant it

that strength which it requires for repressing its evil or too natural inclinations; grant it, above all things, Thy love. Never, O my Saviour! shall I attain to a perfect union with Thee, so long as there still exists any object to which my heart remains attached for its own sake. Either it must renounce, and that for ever, every affection which does not please Thee, or else it must renounce the perfection of that divine union which Thou offerest it in the Holy Eucharist. Ah! can it be esteemed a loss? is it not rather a great gain to empty our hearts of miserable earthly objects, in order that they may be filled with Thee? How much reason have I to blush, that I am still subject to so many distractions; that I still love Thee so little; and that I so often prefer the merest trifles to Thee, the most lovely Object in the universe! Oh, that my heart were penetrated with Thy love, and steeled against all other objects. In Thee, O my God! is all good contained; severed from Thee, all things become contemptible, deceitful, pernicious. Thou art worthy of occupying our whole hearts, so as to leave no space for created things. To love Thee worthily, is to love Thee wholly; and as the soul animates the body, so is Thy divine Spirit given us, in order to animate our whole being to a life nothing less than supernatural.

I truly perceive, Lord, that nothing but fervour—fervour in all I do—fervour sustained and persevered in, can restore me what I have lost by my past indifference and negligence. Why, then, should I fear giving myself up to Thee without reserve? Never shall I be entirely Thine, until I learn to die to myself. Thy life within us, O my Saviour! must needs be a continuation of the life which Thou didst live here on earth. Oh, how holy and divine was that! what a perpetual self-immolation! And how undeniable is it, that the same spirit of sacrifice which then animated Thy Holy Humanity, ought now also to regulate our every action, from our rising up until we lie down again. Grant me this disposition, O Jesus! grant that I may never forget that, in Holy Communion, I receive Thee as a Victim immolated for my sake; grant that the object of all my wishes and efforts may be to resemble Thee, and to know Jesus only—and Jesus crucified! for all things else are vanity.

Especially do I beseech Thee, O Lord! that with every communion I make there may increase in me the desire of belonging more and more to Thee, and of loving Thee undividedly. Most certain it is that he who seeks Thee by halves will never find Thee at all; and, surely, when Thou, who art so great,

givest Thyself wholly to us, we should be niggards, indeed, did we attempt to give up ourselves only in part to Thee. Perish the thought. From this time forward I desire Thee alone. Never again, when I approach the divine Banquet, will I seek only for sweet feelings of devotion, which are the veriest deceptions, when limited to mere expressions of love, without bringing forth those fruits which true love will ever produce. Rather, O Jesus! let me apply myself unceasingly to the contemplation of Thee, crucified for love of me; and in Thy sacred wounds, but, above all, in the wound of Thy adorable heart, let me read what I ought to do, if I would correspond with the immense charity which Thou vouchsafest to show me.

Give me Thy love, O Jesus! give me a love of the Cross, and grace to conform myself in everything to Thy divine example. Oh, that I might become Thy living image! that I might unite myself every day more and more to my crucified Jesus, and that I might be crucified with Him. My God, confer upon others the goods of this world, confer upon others the sensible delights which accompany Thy service. For myself, all that I ask is, the happiness of being united to Thee by a continual resistance to all my inclinations; not only to those which are criminal, but even

to those which pass for innocent, but which do not reach higher than mere nature, and, as such, are opposed to the life of the true Christian, who aims at the heavenly and the supernatural. Give me grace, Lord, never to yield to such temptations, be they great or be they small; give me grace to deny myself even in trifles, and to live only that I may die to Thee unceasingly.

I dare not ask sufferings of Thee, O my God! The frequent and melancholy experience which I have had of my weakness forbids my doing so; yet, if I may not live altogether the life of the Cross, I beseech Thee to vouchsafe me, at least, a desire for such a life. Ah! how is it possible we can desire anything else, when we know that the lot of Thy most favoured servants has ever been to suffer for Thy love; and when we scarcely ever behold Thee, O Jesus! our divine Head and Pattern, except upon Thy beloved Cross. "It would be shameful," says St. Bernard, "for Christians, the members of Christ, to live delicately whilst their Head was crowned with thorns." Keep from me, Lord, so great a misery, and grant me grace to exclaim with Thy holy Saint: "*O bona crux!* O precious Cross, which has received so much beauty from the divine members of our Lord! O Cross, which I have so ardently desired, so

tenderly loved, so perpetually sought for, and at last so happily found ! take me away from men, and restore me to my Lord and Master ; that He who, through thee, redeemed me, through thee may receive me to Himself.*

Ever let me keep in mind that the effect of Christ's august Sacrament, when duly received, is a transformation of ourselves into Him ; whereby we become so many counterparts of Himself, and, if it may be said, so many Christs. *Christianus alter Christus* : " A Christian is another Christ." It is thus, also, that the great Augustine speaks, in words truly divine : " I am the Bread of the strong," saith Christ ; " grow strong, and eat. It is not I who shall be changed into thee, but thou into Me. *Cibus sum grandium ; cresce, et manduca : non Ego mutabor in te, sed tu mutaberis in Me.*" If the greatest privilege to which such souls as a Catherine of Sienna, a Magdalene de Pazzi, or a Teresa, can aspire upon earth, as a reward for their love and fidelity, is that of being permitted to follow Jesus on His way to Calvary, and to die with Him upon the Cross ; we can easily see what

* " O bona crux, quæ decorem ex membris Domini suscepisti, diu desiderata, sollicite amata, sine intermissione quæsita, et aliquando cupienti animo præparata ; accipe me ab hominibus, et redde me Magistro meo ; ut per te me recipiat, qui per te me redemit."

kind of change such holy souls would desire to be wrought within them at holy Communion. Would it be to be changed into Jesus, happy and glorified as He is now in Heaven; or to be changed into Jesus crucified, whelmed in shame, and racked by sufferings? Surely it would be the latter, for it is in the latter state that sanctity is to be acquired here on earth. Let this, then, also be our object in holy Communion. "*One good Communion,*" says St. Teresa, "is sufficient to render a person a great saint."

O my God! I feel that these things are true; I beseech Thee, then, refuse me not grace to bring to Thy Sacrament such a self-denying disposition as may procure for me the abundance of Thy blessings; such a love for the sufferings of the Cross, that I may be able to immolate unceasingly my whole being to Thee, and to become one victim with Thee. Grant that I may no longer place any obstacle in the way of those graces which Thou offerest me in this Mystery of Thy love, and may thus receive Thy gifts in all their fullness. Vouchsafe, O my Jesus! to incorporate me with Thy entire self, and to admit me to a full participation in Thy Crucifixion. There will then remain nothing for me to wish, to desire, or to ask of Thee upon earth. Hear me, I beseech Thee, for the sake of that

adorable Heart, to which Thou hast but now so closely united me.

I pray, also, for others no less than for myself, entreating Thee to shew them Thy mercy. O my Saviour! grant to all Thy love—Thy holy and divine love; and if amongst my acquaintance there be a soul, the sport of the same illusions that have so long misled me, enlighten that soul in Thy goodness. Point out to her the way of the Cross, the only way that leads to Thee, and may Thy love strengthen her to walk therein. Pour down upon all the members of Thy Church the fullness of Thy Spirit,—that Spirit of light, of love, and of strength, which should ever animate them. Grant Thy love to those who seek it; increase it in those who already possess it; and withhold it not from those who at present have no knowledge of it, who have no concern about it, who, perchance, look upon it as an empty dream; that so all hearts may become Thine for time and eternity.

Good Resolutions.

What resolutions shall I make? what fruit shall I seek to gather from the Communion whence I have just returned? What wilt thou do, O my soul! in order to respond to the incomprehensible love of Jesus? Oh, that

Divine love might inspire me ! Weak, fickle, and miserable as I am, I feel unable to promise Thee anything, O my God ! I feel too painfully, that, of all my past resolutions, nothing remains but the regret that I have so poorly fulfilled them. Nevertheless, Thy mercy invites me ; and taught by bitter experience to distrust my own strength, remembering also the words of Thy apostle, *Virtus in infirmitate perficitur* ; "Power is made perfect in weakness," I take courage.

I resolve, then, from this hour to renounce every love save that of Thee, O God ! I resolve to make strenuous efforts towards detaching myself from created objects, and disengaging my heart from all that tends to weaken my zeal in Thy service. In the place of those empty feelings which once led my heart astray, I will endeavour to substitute a pure and boundless charity. I will love Thee, O my God ! I will love Thee supremely and solely. If I still continue to love anything upon earth, I will love it in Thee, and for Thee. Thee alone shall my eyes behold in all Thy creatures. From this time forward it shall be my study to acquire those practical and solid virtues which are well-pleasing in Thy sight ; humility, self-denial, indifference to all things apart from Thee ; an ever-increasing patience ; a cheerful submission of myself to Thy holy

will; an absolute abandonment of myself; and of all that are dear to me, to the designs of Thy divine Providence; and an unflinching perseverance in seeking Thy love, as the beginning and sole end of that new life which I desire to lead by the help of Thy grace.

And oh, that while building myself up in this love, I may learn to base it firmly on the hatred and renunciation of self? Oh, that it may bring me to a perfect union with Thee, my Jesus, making me one heart and soul with Thee! Oh, that I may be clothed with Thyself, that I may be wholly sanctified by Thee; that Thou mayest dwell in me, and change me into Thee; and that I may dwell in Thee, and live henceforth no other life but Thine! Oh, that my heart may be united to Thy heart, and draw from it Thy own divine dispositions! Oh, that my mind may be united to Thy mind, my soul to Thy soul! Oh, that I may breathe and act henceforward only for Thy glory, and in order to please Thee! Vouchsafe, O my God! to bless and strengthen these my good desires, and may Thy grace render me faithful to them. I behold in myself nought but poverty, misery, weakness, and unworthiness; but I find in Thee a God rich in mercy, lavish of Thy gifts, all powerful, and all good. Yes! Thou wilt enable me to walk with courage in the narrow path of the Cross; Thou

wilt strengthen me with Bread from Heaven ; Thou wilt invigorate me when I faint with weariness ; and thus upheld by Thy mercy, I look forward with confidence, and hope to serve Thee faithfully all the days of my life.

Especially, Lord, would I desire to keep it ever in mind, as a profound truth which cannot be too often recurred to, that the fruit of a good Communion consists in something more than the prayers and feelings which accompany it. Alas ! we are easily deceived by words and sentiments ; but let us listen to St. Paul, "If I speak," he says, "with the tongues of men and of Angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And if I should have prophecy, and should know all mysteries, and all knowledge, and if I should have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And if I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor, and if I should deliver my body to be burned, and not have charity, it profiteth me nothing." He then proceeds to describe the characteristics of this divine virtue, and thus concludes : "Now there remain faith, hope, and charity ; these three, but the greatest of these is charity." Let me ponder well these words of the great Apostle ; let me remember that it is not enough to speak the language of Angels, that language which

doubtless is all love, unless we have charity; that the possession of all knowledge and all faith is not enough for salvation, if we are deficient in charity; and, what is still more astonishing, that it is not enough to strip ourselves of all we have, in order to give it to the poor; not enough, even to suffer martyrdom, unless we have charity. Without charity, we have nothing, we are nothing. How bitterly then, O my soul! oughtest thou to deplore the time when thou wast living without charity, deceived by a fictitious regard for the Cross of thy Saviour. Oh! lament that thou hast lived so long in error; and, at the same time, learn to be on thy guard against similar illusions for the future. Pray earnestly for that true charity, which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Pray that the love of thy God may be the rule of all thy actions; God is the "one thing necessary." Thou hast need, my poor heart, of nought besides Him. Provided thou comest to love Him at last, what signifies to thee anything else?

Lord, from the lowest depth of my soul I cry unto Thee, and implore of Thee the spirit of love. *Nunc cœpi*. Yes; from this moment I make a beginning, which I desire to end only with my life. "Too late have I known Thee, O sovereign Beauty! O Beauty, always

ancient and always new ! O essential Beauty alone worthy of my love !” I cast a last glance upon this world, I sum up all the attractions it contains, and I cry out, *Vanitas vanitatum*, “Vanity of vanities;” and conclude, “it is good for me to adhere to my God,” in order to serve Him and love Him alone.

Let but charity obtain possession of the heart, and the heart will quickly dispossess itself of all things else ; God is my all ; I desire to be only His. *Tuus sum ego* : “I am thine.” Yes, my divine Jesus, Thy love, Thy grace, and the love of Thy holy Cross,—such a love as will enable me to exclaim with St. Denys the Areopagite, “O my crucified Love !”—these are the sole goods that I desire henceforward on earth. I ask for nought besides. *Thy love through time ; Thy love through eternity ; Thy love even to the hatred of myself* : may these be the effects wrought in me by this Communion.

O Mary, spotless Mother of Love ! present thou my prayer unto the Lord, and I shall be most certainly heard.

Aspiration of Love to Jesus.

Place me as a jewel upon Thy breast and upon Thine arm, O Lord ! and may the fire and sweetness of Thy love so absorb my soul,

that I may die of love for Thy love, even as Thou didst die for love of my love. O Jesus! O Love, more beautiful than the sons of men! draw me after Thee by the strong cords of Thy love. O Jesus, my Master, who hast begun the good work in me! teach me Thy will, that I may learn of Thee, because Thou art meek and humble of heart. O Jesus, Thou lover of silence, Thou strength of the silent heart! it is good for me to keep close to Thee; for what have I in Heaven, and what do I desire upon earth, but Thee, O Jesus, Thou God of my heart, and my portion for ever?*

* "Pone me ut signaculum super cor tuum, super brachium tuum, et absorbeat, quæso, Domine, mentem meam ignita ac melliflua vis amoris tui; ut amore amoris tui moriar, qui amore amoris mei dignatus es mori. Jesu, amor speciose præ filiis hominum, trahe me post Te in vinculis charitatis tuæ. Jesu, præceptor, qui cœpisti facere, doce me voluntatem tuam, ut discam a Te, quia mitis es et humilis corde. Jesu silentii amator, cordis silentis fortitudo, Tibi adhærere mihi bonum est; et quid mihi est in cœlo, et a Te quid volui super terram, O Jesu, Deus cordis mei, pars mea?"

VISITS

TO THE

MOST HOLY SACRAMENT.

THE practice of visiting the most holy Sacrament is naturally connected with the foregoing exercises, and is one which cannot be too greatly commended. Amongst all the devotions practised in honour of our blessed Redeemer, this one, directed as it is to the Sacrament of His love, must be especially acceptable to Him; and all who desire to live religiously should make a point of observing it where it is in their power to do so.

There are many excellent motives which might lead us to visit that divine Saviour, who, for our sakes, permits Himself to be enclosed within our Tabernacles; but we may be sure that those visits please Him most, which are made from a motive of love, and

from a desire of increasing in ourselves that heavenly virtue. Let us, then, in our visits to Him, strive to be influenced by this sublime sentiment; let us make Him an offering of ourselves, praying that we may be wholly burnt up with the fire of His love; and as we present Him our hearts, a divine flame will come forth from His holy Altar, to kindle and consume them.

The mysterious life of Jesus in the holy Eucharist is a life entirely of love; and it is of His free choice alone that He has submitted Himself to this state for our sakes. Let us, then, acknowledge with gratitude this excess of love; let us contemplate it in silent admiration; and let us beseech Him to keep us self-annihilated in a profound humility before His holy Tabernacle.

Alas! for the most part we have no idea of paying Jesus other than interested visits. Our object is self. We feel that we have wants, and we desire to make these known to Him that He may relieve them. But even looking at the question simply in this point of view, have we any want so great as that of loving God, and of loving Him always more and more? Oh, that we could feel vividly how needful it is that we should love Him! let us be urgent; let us be importunate; let us omit no effort, in order to acquire this great gift;

inasmuch as it is the effectual means of obtaining success in all our other petitions.

Some short methods towards making these visits with fruit, will perhaps be not unacceptable to the reader in this place; always remembering, that a book, at best, can but supply motives and expressions; the Holy Ghost alone can inspire the internal sentiments with which we ought to be animated.

AIDS TO MEDITATION IN THE PRESENCE OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

In your visits to the blessed Sacrament, you will find abundant material for meditation, by accustoming yourself to consider the Presence of your Lord under different heads.

I. For instance, you may contemplate Him at each visit, under one or more of the different relationships in which He stands towards you; that is to say, as your God, your King, your heavenly Spouse, your divine Pattern, your Judge, your Reward, and so on through the various titles under which He has revealed Himself.

As your God. I am come to adore Thee, O great God! O supreme Majesty! Would that it were in my power to remain unceasingly

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at the foot of Thy holy Altar, in order to render Thee that homage which is Thy due. O God, all holy! O God, all powerful! accept the aspirations of my soul, and render them worthy of being offered unto Thee.

Your own reflections will supply you with ample material for prayer under this head. What is given here, as in all that follows, is given simply by way of suggestion.

As your King. Thou reignest in Heaven, O King Almighty! O God of all holiness! When will the time come that Thou shalt reign undividedly in my soul? O Jesus! O my eternal Lord! make haste to establish within me the kingdom of Thy grace and of Thy love, that I may merit one day to enter the everlasting kingdom of Thy glory.

As your heavenly Spouse. Lord, of Thine infinite mercy, Thou hast chosen me in preference to thousands who would have loved and served Thee far better than I have done. Oh, then, since Thou art so merciful as to number my soul among Thine espoused ones, inspire it, I beseech Thee, with an inviolable constancy to Thee, and with that absolute devotedness which is Thy due.

As your divine Pattern. Adorable Saviour, Thou camest down from Heaven, and didst walk upon this earth, in order, among Thy other mercies, to set before us an example of

every virtue. Alas! what little pains have I taken to conform myself to Thy sublime Pattern! how little have I striven to imitate Thee! Oh, vouchsafe to pluck from my heart all that hinders me from growing to Thy likeness.

As your Judge. O God of Justice! Thou art here upon this holy Altar. I acknowledge it to be so; and well might I tremble in the presence of my Judge, did I not know that Thou presentest Thyself here before me, less as a Judge than as a Saviour. Vouchsafe, then, to have pity on my soul, now, while there is yet time, so that in the dreadful day of Thy vengeance, I may obtain pardon at Thy hands.

As your Reward and last End. I adore Thee, O my God! at the foot of Thy holy Altar. Oh, that I may one day be so happy as to possess Thee in the habitation of Thy glory! It is for this end that Thou hast created me. Ah, when shall that blessed period arrive, when Thou wilt call me to Thyself! For this grace I wait, for this felicity I sigh, every hour that I remain here below.

II. Another ample supply of subject-matter for our spiritual intercourse with Jesus Christ in His divine Sacrament, is to be found in

the various aspects which our spiritual condition presents. For instance:

As a Christian Soul. Give thanks to God that He has vouchsafed to provide you a home in the bosom of His Church; that He has enlightened you with the divine rays of His Gospel, while so many others lie whelmed in the darkness of error, and in the shadow of death;—and so in like manner, for the other mercies of His Providence, general and special, as connected with your Christian state.

As a Soul called to a more interior Life. What innumerable subjects of thought must here suggest themselves to you, filling your heart with thankfulness for that sublime gift of grace, which has withdrawn you from the world, and established you in the religious state. Ah, thy merciful God foresaw that the world would have been to thee the occasion of manifold transgressions. He it was who inspired thee to renounce it; who snatched thee from its dangers; who brought thee into a place of safety. To Him, therefore, pour forth thy heart in aspirations of the liveliest gratitude.

As a penitent Soul. O thou heart-stricken one, come and kneel before thy Saviour, entreating His pardon for thy numerous infidelities, for thy long-continued resistance to His heavenly grace, for thy indifference towards

thy God, and for the little profit thou hast derived from the innumerable advantages which He has bestowed upon thee. Not yet is the fountain of His mercy dried up. Even now it is ready to gush forth so soon as the voice of thy contrition shall reach the ear of thy God.

As an afflicted Soul. Come, thou that art disturbed by inward griefs, come and be consoled at the feet of thy Saviour; open to Him thy heart, and share with him thy sorrows. He sees them, He knows them, but He wishes thee to confide them to Him of thine own accord. He will sweeten them, He will sanctify them, by teaching thee to bear them patiently, to unite them with His sufferings, to lay them at the foot of His Cross.

As a Soul assailed by its spiritual Enemies. O thou grievously tempted one! here is the place for thee to entreat thy deliverance, if such be the holy will of thy God; here, at least, thou mayest obtain strength to resist courageously, if He permits thee to be again exposed to thy foe; here, if anywhere, He will hear thy prayer, and grant thy petition.

As a Soul in danger of lukewarmness. Come, O tepid spirit! come before thy increasing torpor altogether overwhelms thee; Jesus is here, waiting to reanimate thy fervour. Kneel down before Him, and say, with tears of sor-

row, "Lord, my present state afflicts me, because I know that it is displeasing to Thee. O Jesus! Thou whose divine Heart is all love, Thou who camest to kindle this holy fire on earth, enkindle it, I beseech Thee, in this miserable heart of mine."

As a Soul consecrated to the Heart of Jesus. Where, O Soul! canst thou renew thy consecration to the adorable Heart of thy Saviour better than here, in this sublime Sanctuary, consecrated by the presence of His Divinity and most sacred Humanity. Come, then, and with all thy fervour exclaim, "O Jesus! O my Saviour! what blessedness is mine in occupying a place in Thy Heart! Grant, that I may apply myself unceasingly to the contemplation of its sublime attributes, its infinite charity, its spirit of self-sacrifice, its sweetness, its profound humility. Grant that, with all my strength, I may endeavour to resemble it."

III. As from the general state of the soul we may draw abundant matter for our devotions; so, too, we may, from the excitements to which it is temporarily liable. For instance:

Has any event occurred which fills you with joy? Let not the opportunity pass by which is thus afforded you of gratefully acknowledging His Divine Providence, who while concealed within our Sanctuaries beneath the

sacramental veil, is at the same time the Disposer of all events throughout the universe, inasmuch as "all power is given unto Him in heaven and in earth."

Do you happen to suffer from unusual anxiety of mind? Draw nigh to this God of all consolation, and beseech Him to establish His peace in your soul.

Do you feel yourself inwardly prompted to devote yourself in an especial manner to God? Come hither, and before His Holy Altar offer yourself both to do and to suffer all that He may demand of you.

Does it enter your mind that God requires of you some particular sacrifice? This is the place where you may successfully entreat His assistance towards accomplishing it generously and without delay.

Or, have you been alarmed at the sight of death, and does the thought of your own death terrify you? Here it is that, kneeling before your eternal Lord, you may with confidence implore His mercy to prepare you for your last hour, and to support you in its agonies, by vouchsafing you the grace of the holy Viaticum.

IV. Another plentiful source of matter for devotion before the holy Eucharist will be found in the necessities of the Church,

and of all in whose happiness you are interested, whose salvation you believe to be in danger, or who have asked your prayers. Be diligent, also, in praying for the souls in Purgatory, especially for such as you have known in the days of their mortality.

It is, in truth, an impossibility for any one who is really in earnest to be at a loss for fitting subjects. All that we need is faith. The mere ordinary course of life, in its daily vicissitudes, supplies us with abundant material; and we may be sure that the greater number of visits we are thus induced to pay to our hidden Saviour, the greater is the glory that we give to God, and the greater the merit that we obtain for ourselves.

In what follows the reader will find, it is hoped, some further assistance towards the practice of this admirable devotion.

INVITATION TO PRAY AT THE FOOT OF THE
HOLY ALTAR.

O my soul! wherein has thy God injured thee, that thou shouldest experience such weariness in His presence? He created thee to be always near Him; and thou, on the contrary, continually keepest at a distance. Oh, return—return to thy loving Redeemer! and

rather than quit Him any more, quit all created things that separate thee from Him.

Hearken to the soft, low voice that calls thee.—It is thy God Himself.—Open, then, the ear of thy heart, and listen to the sweet words that issue from His holy Tabernacle.

“My daughter, come unto Me.”

“I come, Lord; what wilt Thou have me to do?”

“To remain a few moments with Me, My daughter. Ah, knowest thou what a happiness it is that I offer thee? Comprehendest thou this grace? Above all, desirest thou to profit by it? Dost thou truly understand that I, thy God, am here present in My most sacred Humanity, upon this Altar, within this Tabernacle, underneath the simple figure of Bread? If thou understandest it, dost thou believe it? Thou dost;—but with how little faith. Make haste, then, and reanimate thy faith.—Lo! thy Creator, the great God, the holy God, the Almighty, the most High, the Infinite, is here—even He Himself.—Jesus, thy Saviour, thy Redeemer, thy Friend, thy Brother, thy Consoler, thy Spouse, is within a short distance of thee.—Believe that it is so; believe and adore; and let it be thy happiness and thy glory to prostrate thyself in the profoundest abasement before His footstool,

lost in depths of wonder, repentance, gratitude, and love."

Prayer.

"How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God." Lord, Thou invitest me this day to come and repose myself near Thee awhile in silence and solitude. Ah, how deeply have I experienced the necessity of that retirement which Thou here offerest me! I am bowed down—I faint—I languish—athirst for the living stream of Thy grace—even as the hart, wearied with the chase, panteth after the fountains of water; and where shall I find that peace for which my soul sighs, except at the foot of Thine Altar, O my God?—Happy, thrice happy, those who dwell in Thy Temple, who have made it their refuge, and whose souls Thou daily fillest with Thy divine unction.

Already I feel springing up in my heart an ardent desire to love Thee, and to taste the sacred transports of that vivid faith which glows in Thy chosen ones when they enter Thy Sanctuary. I believe, O my God! that Thou art truly here present; I believe it most firmly, because I know that Thou hast said

so; and that nothing is impossible to the omnipotence of Thy love. But who can explain, O adorable Jesus! the miracle which day by day Thou continuest to work in this divine Sacrament! Who can explain this prodigy of prodigies—this mystery of mysteries—this fathomless abyss of Thy charity? Love, and love alone, has prompted Thee to take up Thy abode in yonder Tabernacle, and nought but love do we breathe in approaching it. O infinite Love! come, then, and enkindle my heart; come and consume within it whatsoever opposes itself to Thy sacred flames. Change my weakness into strength, my indifference into zeal, my faint-heartedness into a noble fervour. Oh, that I could offer myself up to Thee unceasingly, in order to please Thee, and to show Thee my gratitude. How much have I to thank Thee for, O my God! Every day of my life has been marked by some new mercy. All that I have, all that I am, is the work of Thy goodness. Notwithstanding the continual abuse to which I turn Thy benefits, Thou nevertheless continuest to lavish them upon me; and the more ungrateful I am to Thee, the greater is Thy tenderness. O incomprehensible Goodness! I will never cease to sing Thy praise, and to celebrate Thy loving mercies.

Inexhaustible Source of love, what shall I say unto Thee! and how shall I express all that I feel! O my God! O Love ineffable! how little art Thou known! how little art Thou loved! O Love that ever burnest, and art never consumed! I desire to love Thee. I consecrate to Thee all that remains to me of life and strength, desiring to employ it in proving my gratitude. From this time forward I renounce whatsoever may be displeasing to Thee; and I dedicate to Thee my heart, with all its most darling affections.

Oh, be Thou my consolation, my refuge, my strength, my joy, and my whole delight. Grant me grace to return Thee love for love, and life for life; and grant that, loving Thee in life and in death, I may love Thee hereafter for ever in the kingdom of Thy glory.

EXERCISE BEFORE THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

Place yourself in the presence of God; adore Him, and strive to recollect yourself. Then, abasing yourself before Him, listen to what He shall say. God speaks in a secret manner; His divine words, independent of our sensual organs, have the power of entering at once the ear of the heart, and of making themselves heard by the soul. It was thus that He spake to Jerusalem of old. "Behold," He

says, "I will allure her, and will lead her into the wilderness, and I will speak to her *heart*." Thus, too, Jesus Christ is ready to speak to you in His divine Sacrament, enlightening your mind and enkindling your soul. Voiceless, indeed, will be His language, but a thousandfold more expressive than all the eloquence of man; and oh, how full of surpassing tenderness! Divine Saviour as He is how can He, in fact, speak otherwise than in accents of love? How can His words escape being accompanied by a divine unction altogether marvellous in its results?

Those vivid and penetrating impressions which transported the Saints in the Presence of the blessed Sacrament, as we read in their Lives, were nothing else but the sublime effects of this His gracious operation; and although, it is true, such extraordinary gifts are not the lot of all, nevertheless, it is the duty of every Christian to seek them according to that measure of grace which God bestows upon him. Listen, then, to the secret voice of your Saviour, and He will teach you all that you need to know, both for this life and for that which is to come. He will show you the way in which you ought to walk; He will discover to you the dangers which you must avoid; He will undeceive you as respects the world's false promises; He will set before you

that perfection at which you should aim ; He will remind you of your transgressions, and of the infinite mercy which has pardoned them ; He will reanimate your fervour and zeal, will advise you in your perplexities, will support you in your temptations, and will be always ready to listen to you, and to proportion His graces to your necessities. Come, then, to Him ; come to Jesus ; come to this loving Saviour, and may love be the principal motive that draws you to Him.

Speak to Him in His own divine language. Is it not just and right that we should return Him love for love ? and is not His adorable Sacrament all love ? Beseech Him to pierce your heart with one single spark of that divine fire which He came to bring upon earth, and with which He would rejoice to behold you inflamed. Recall to your memory all the claims which He has upon you ; reflect again and again on the excess of that charity which prompts Him, God as He is, to dwell in the midst of us ; to associate, in a manner, with us, and to give Himself up to us. Ah ! can you fail of being touched to the heart by such considerations ? Can you escape loving Him ? Can you escape feeling an ardent desire to tell Him of your love, to repeat to Him unceasingly that He is your Well-beloved, the only Beloved of your soul ? Be-

think you, in whom can you possibly confide better than in Him, the God of mercy and love? Oh, then, impart to Him freely all your wants; all your good purposes, intentions, desires, weaknesses. Pour forth your heart into His, and confide to Him all your troubles, entreating of Him strength and courage to endure them joyfully for His sake. Above all things petition of Him grace to love Him; and then, abandoning yourself to His holy will and good pleasure, fear nothing, knowing that love is your guide. O heavenly love! O love of my God! O depth which I cannot fathom! but into which my soul plunges with ever renewed delight! I yield myself up to Thee. Let such be the language of your heart, as you kneel in your Saviour's blessed Presence. But remember that for this purpose there needs not a multitude of words. A single ejaculation is enough—a tear—a sigh—a glance, so to say, of the heart—or, still better, a devout silence, as, with the beloved disciple, we recline on the bosom of Jesus, or repose, at least, at the foot of His Cross.

Oh, silence, more delicious than the sweetest voices of men and angels! How acceptable art thou at a time like this! How far better is it to be silent than to speak in the presence of our God! Oh, ecstatic moment spent in

the bosom of Deity ! great indeed must be the happiness which the soul enjoys with her God in Heaven, when, even here below, simply to recollect one's self in His Presence, is in itself a felicity preferable to the most intense enjoyment that earth can supply.

Petition.

What happiness is mine, O my divine Saviour ! to find myself here before Thee in Thy holy Temple, and to have it in my power to offer Thee my heart ! How much have I longed for this moment ! It is now come, and I am again in Thy presence. O Thou who art my Rest, my Life, my only Joy, when I am away from Thee, the centre of my existence is lost ; and while I am near Thee, willingly would I forget the world and all things created. Banish from my soul, O Lord ! all distraction and every thought that can possibly separate me from Thee ; all languor, all lukewarmness, all negligence, all that might render the homage which I would pay Thee unworthy of Thy sovereign Majesty. Grant that I may be solely occupied in adoring Thy infinite greatness, soliciting Thy graces, and sighing over my manifold infidelities and miseries. O my God ! I beseech Thee to bestow upon me the fulness of Thy mercies, fervour in Thy service, aversion to sin, detachment from the world,

resignation under my trials, conformity to Thy will, and an entire abandonment of myself to Thy divine Providence. Lastly, and above all things, I desire Thy love.

Ye angels of heaven! who encompass yon holy Tabernacle, I unite with you in adoration to the King of glory and everlasting God. Oh! that I could offer Him affections as pure, as true, as glowing, as your own! Vouchsafe to supply for my unworthiness, and to obtain for me, now and ever, all the graces of which I stand in need.

Consecration of ourselves to Jesus present in the most Holy Sacrament.

Prostrate at the foot of Thine altar, O my God! and filled with gratitude for all Thy mercies, I come to make before Thee a profession of eternal fidelity. Vouchsafe to receive the homage which I render Thee. From this time forward I resolve never to love anything apart from Thee; and to be ready to sacrifice unto Thee all that I have, at Thy first bidding. My property, my health, my strength, my talents, my liberty, my very life, all are Thine, dispose of them as Thou wilt. I consecrate them entirely to thee, that they may be employed solely in Thy service. What couldst Thou have done more for me, than what Thou hast done in dying upon the Cross for my sal-

vation, and immolating Thyself continually day by day for me upon Thy Holy altar?

O Love of my God! I thank Thee with my whole heart. I reckon as lost every hour of my life—every feeling of my soul—that I have not devoted to thee. Accept in Thy goodness of what remains; and if I cannot love Thee as much as I desire, and as Thou deservest, grant, at least, that I may love Thee as much as lies in my power. I pray, that, apart from Thee, I may find nought but disappointment and bitterness; and may thus be driven, by a blessed necessity, to love henceforward Thee only, and to live for Thee alone. Amen.

Reparation to Jesus for the Indignities to which He is exposed in the Holy Sacrament.

O my God and Saviour! true God and true Man! I adore thy Presence in the august Sacrament of the Altar, with the profoundest homage. I wish to love Thee with my whole heart, and to make reparation to Thee for all the irreverence, profanation, and sacrilege which myself or others have been guilty of towards Thee.

Oh! that it were in my power to adore Thee with the same degree of perfection and love as the heavenly Spirits! But if I cannot do this, at least it is the intention of my heart to

glorify Thee as much as I am able; not only on my own account, but also in behalf of all who neglect Thee—of all who know Thee not—of all who blaspheme Thee— that they may be converted and live. O my God! O blessed Jesus! mayest Thou be known, praised, adored, loved, and glorified by all, everywhere and for ever, in the most holy and adorable Sacrament of Thy love!

A PARAPHRASE OF THE EIGHTY-THIRD PSALM,
CONTAINING THREE COLLOQUIES WITH JESUS
CHRIST, PRESENT IN THE MOST HOLY SA-
CRAMENT.

§ 1.

“How lovely are Thy tabernacles, O Lord of Hosts! my soul longeth and fainteth for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh have rejoiced in the living God.”

Such were the feelings with which the prophets regarded the Jewish Sanctuary; what, then, ought not I to feel, O my God! on approaching Thine Altar! Here are no empty figures, no unreal shadows, but Thou Thyself, O Lord of glory! Here Thou renewest day by day the Sacrifice first offered upon Calvary; here Thou bringest Heaven down upon earth, and workest a perpetual miracle, in order that Thou mayest be present in the midst of Thy children.

I bow before Thee, I glorify Thee, I adore Thee, O my Lord and my God! and humbly thank Thee for Thy Goodness in permitting Thy unworthy creature to converse with Thee in this august Sacrament. Ah! how can I ever again be lukewarm in Thy Presence! Oh, that, with Thy Saints, I could abase myself to the dust before Thee! Oh, that like the Cherubim who encompass Thee round, I were all on fire with Divine love! O God of my heart! what need I further to seek upon earth, what is there for me to desire even in Heaven? Heaven itself is upon this holy Altar, where God is present. Speak but the word, Lord; say to my soul, *I am thy Salvation*; and straightway it shall be healed; its apathy and indifference shall vanish! "my heart and my flesh shall rejoice in the living God."

Lord, a thousandfold happy are they who dwell in Thy house, and whose only pleasure it is to contemplate Thy majesty under the veil wherewith thou concealest it. All praise to Thee, O my God! I need not search far to find Thee. Thy temples are ever open to me; I can at all times come and confide to Thee my troubles, shed my tears in Thy bosom, and ask of Thee Thy love. Oh, that I might dwell in Thy house all the days of my life; oh, that I might taste that divine sweetness with which Thou transportest Thy faithful

adorers, and might thence imbibe a love of those virtues which Thou hast set us an example of, and, at the same time, grace and strength to practise them. Oh, that all my happiness might consist in visiting Thee; that I might never seek for any other; and that while the duties of life detain me from Thy holy Temple, I might still remain in heart and spirit at the foot of Thine altar, always walking as in Thy Presence.

“The sparrow hath found herself a house, and the turtle a nest; even Thine altars, O Lord of Hosts, my King and my God.”

How can I sufficiently thank Thee, O my God! for having set up in Thy House, for those who love Thee, a place of refuge from this wicked generation, and from the miseries of our mortal life! Too long have I sought for happiness in the world. But from all its profane pleasures I gained nought but disappointment, restlessness, and trouble. Thou alone hast given me peace. Here, kneeling before thee, more tranquil than the dove beneath the roof of her own choice, I find at the foot of Thy Altar a repose which banishes every false pleasure from my breast. Here the world is hushed; its voice, which speaks only to deceive, is heard no more; and Thy words alone pierce the stillness, calming our passions, appeasing our fears, dispelling our apathy,

moderating our desires. Whence it comes to pass, that here my thoughts ever become more enlarged, and my soul more exalted and purified; and I never leave Thy holy Temple without an increased desire to become better, and without finding myself happier. Thou art my comfort in my banishment, my consolers in affliction; my friend, when all the world forsakes. When I weep, Thou driest my tears; when I faint, Thou sustainest me; when I fall, Thy goodness raises me up. Thou effacest all the stains of my soul. Thou clothest her with justice, Thou restorest to her innocence.

Oh, how far happier to abide in Thy house, concealed, forgotten, unknown to men, than to dwell in the tabernacles of sinners. Ever since my heart has tasted of Thy sweetness; O my only Good! everything that leads me not to Thee, that reminds me not of Thee, has become to me only vexation and bitterness of spirit. Yes, my God, it is most true; one single day, one single hour, one single moment, spent in heavenly converse with Thee, is sweeter far than an entire life of what the world calls pleasure.

§ 2.

“The Lawgiver shall give His blessing; they shall go from virtue to virtue. The God of gods shall be seen in Sion. Behold, O God!

our Protector, and look upon the face of Thy Christ."

O Jesus, my sovereign Master and divine Lawgiver! in this place is the throne of Thy love, and here it is that Thou givest Law to Thy children. "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." Command what Thou wilt, so only Thou give me strength to perform what Thou enjoimest. I ask not of Thee temporal blessings, for these Thou often conferrest as a punishment upon Thine enemies; but vouchsafe, Lord, to bless my soul. Give to others the goods of this world, but to me give virtue. I have come hither that I may obtain it of Thee; for here Thou art truly present upon this very Altar, to scatter my darkness, to strengthen my weakness, to inflame my love. Yes, and were it in my power, hither would I come every day of my life, Thou well knowest, to reinvigorate my soul, and to advance from virtue to virtue, until that happy day arrives, when I shall behold Thee, without a veil, in the heavenly Jerusalem, and shall possess Thee without fear of losing Thee again for ever.

Hearken, O Father Almighty! to the petition of Thy servant; and if I am unworthy of being heard, by reason of the multitude of my sins, turn Thine eyes upon Thine only-begotten Son, the object of Thy love from all eternity; and behold Him here upon this holy

Altar, offering unto Thee, in my behalf, His Wounds, His Blood, his infinite Merits. In Him and through Him I address to Thee my prayer. Canst Thou refuse to listen? I ask but one favour of Thee, namely, that I may love Thee, and may never cease to love Thee. Long hast Thou waited for me, and too long have I resisted Thy grace, O my God! never again may I fall into so fatal an error; never again may this heart, which has once tasted Thy ineffable sweetness, return to seek from creatures a delusive and fatal happiness. My heart was made for Thee; suffer it not to find repose apart from Thee. Alas! what is there so captivating in this valley of tears? What are its purest pleasures at best, but imperfect and limited? and can they, then, satisfy an illimitable soul? What are its enjoyments, but vain and transitory, and soon to end in death? and can they then satisfy an immortal being? What are its occupants, but miserable creatures, searching, like myself, after happiness? and can they, then, confer happiness? O Sovereign Goodness of my God! Thou alone canst satisfy all my desires. Thou alone art enduring, infinite, eternal. Thou art the only friend who changes not, and from whom death itself cannot separate me, provided I am so happy as to die in Thy grace and in Thy love.

Oh, hateful days, in which I lived without loving God ! Rather let me die than be again separated from Him. My heart is Thine, O my God ! but it is weak and inconstant ; vouchsafe to establish it by Thy grace. Let me but love Thee, and the entire world will become as nothing in my sight ; every cross will appear easy, and it will be sweet to me to carry it after Jesus. Till now I have only loved Him in words and in desire. O Jesus, who in this Sacrament livest for me, and immolatest Thyself for me ! grant that henceforth I may love Thee in deed and in truth, and both in life and in death may be wholly and for ever Thine.

§ 3.

“ For God loveth mercy and truth ; the Lord will give grace and glory. He will not deprive of good things them that walk in innocence. O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee.”

Thou lovest mercy, O my God ! Thou Thyself assurest me of it. Infinite in Thy goodness, Thou makest not use of Thy power to terrify Thy creatures, nor to crush them beneath the weight of Thy greatness ; but, on the contrary, Thou employest it, O loving Father ! for their happiness. Love is Thy essence, and mercy Thy delight. So long as I

walk before Thee in simplicity of heart, Thine eyes rest lovingly upon me, and I have a promise from Thee of Thy most precious gifts,—those gifts which alone I need, and which alone I ought to value—Thy truth for my guide; Thy mercy for my refuge; grace for this life; glory for eternity. Oh, how consoling is this thought to one who, by reason of his manifold transgressions, hardly dared so much as lift up his eyes to Heaven!

My God, Thy voice has penetrated the depth of my soul; it has brought me peace; it has brought me happiness. Blessed thought; Thou Thyself deignest to solicit my confidence. What a support is this to my excessive weakness! How does my consciousness of it soothe the restlessness of my soul. No longer does the past torment me, or the future disquiet me. I have confided all to Thee, and rest tranquilly on Thy divine bosom.

Forgive me, Lord, that I ever distrusted Thee. Knew I not that a mother can suffer everything from her children but want of confidence in her affection? Knew I not that a friend can bear all things except distrust? So it is in earthly things; and how, then, could I distrust Thee? How could I refuse to place my miseries at Thy feet, seeing that Thou hast come down from Heaven on purpose to relieve them? O Jesus! I yield to Thee; it

is time Thy love should triumph. Thy servant is ready; Thou hast called, and I am here. Henceforth I abandon myself to Thee without reserve. My health, my reputation, my interests, my happiness, my life, all that I hold most dear, I confide to the care of Thy love. In Thy hands I place my soul, with all its weaknesses and miseries, and I desire never again to call it my own.

Yes, my God, from this time forward Thou alone shalt be my light and my salvation, my strength and my hope. Whatever troubles may come upon me, I will not be dismayed. Though the world and hell conspire my ruin, my confidence in Thee shall continue unshaken! and when at last my soul, full of trouble, and encompassed with darkness, beholds the shades of death gathering round her, even then I will fear no evil, "for Thou shalt be with me," and in that dread hour I trust to find Thee more lovely and richer in mercy than ever before. Yes, henceforward, in life and in death, I am Thine; I rely upon Thee alone, and give myself up unreservedly to Thy will, and to Thy divine love.

ON DEVOTION TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS.

In all books of piety, some practice of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is found appended to Visits to the Blessed Sacrament; and indeed it is evident that there is a natural connexion between the two, arising out of the very Mystery of the Incarnation.

This devotion, consisting as it does in loving and honouring with a peculiar worship the adorable Heart of our Saviour, aims in an especial manner at inspiring us with a deep sense of His immeasurable love. The heart is the symbol and seat of love; and as everything in Jesus speaks to us of love, so, in particular, His sacred Heart, glowing with that fire which He came to bring upon earth, is its perfect pattern and exemplar. Devotion to the Heart of Jesus implies a consecration of ourselves to Divine love,—a longing desire to be inflamed with it, and a constant effort to acquire it. What can be more blessed than to be thus animated; what more needful for us, and more worthy of an immortal spirit? To be devout to the Heart of Jesus, is to possess the true devotion of the heart.

Let us, then, devote ourselves to this divine Heart; It invites us; It calls us; It presses us to draw nigh; It loves to be loved; It yearns to deliver us from all our evils. However deep

our wounds, this adorable Heart has power to heal them; however desperate our case, this adorable Heart is almighty, and nothing can resist Its will, even as nothing can exhaust Its love. Here we may find celestial armour for our defence, strength against temptation, the sweetest comfort in trouble, and the purest delight that can be tasted in this valley of tears. Art thou afflicted? does the remembrance of thy sins trouble thee? the Heart of Jesus is open to thee. Oh, betake thyself to it, and enjoy the secure repose which it affords; betake thyself to this fountain of all graces, where every thirst is quenched; to this inexhaustible treasure, in which all riches are contained; to this furnace of love, in which every other love is burned up, consumed, annihilated. Art thou in a state of dejection or despondence, from whatsoever cause? immerge thyself in the Heart of Jesus, as in an ocean of consolation. Is thy soul deprived of spiritual freshness?—in the Heart of Jesus it will find that reinvigoration which it needs. Art thou affrighted at the sight of thy infidelities, thy inconstancies, and frequent relapses?—this adorable Heart is compassion itself, and from it thou shalt gain new courage. Wouldst thou make some atonement to Almighty God for thy ingratitude to Him?—offer Him the merits of the Heart of Jesus,

Wouldst thou escape the violence of temptation,—the furious assault of some sudden passion?—the Heart of Jesus shall be thy support and thine inward life. Wouldst thou gain strength to suffer?—from the Heart of Jesus shalt thou learn how to bear all things with patience, and even with joy, for His sake.

Reparation to the sacred Heart of Jesus.

O adorable Heart of my Saviour and my God! filled with the most lively grief at the indignities which Thou hast received, and which Thou receivest daily, in the Sacrament of Thy love, I prostrate myself before Thy holy Altar, desiring to offer Thee all the reparation in my power. Oh, that, by the profound depth of my homage, I could make some amends for the contempt which Thou continually endurest! Oh, that, by my tears and by my blood, I could efface the innumerable profanations and sacrileges by which men dishonour Thine infinite majesty! my life could not be better bestowed than in such a cause.

I entreat Thee also, O divine Saviour! to forgive all the ingratitude, carelessness, and irreverence of which I have myself been guilty towards Thee. Remember that Thy adorable Heart bore the weight of my transgressions through the course of its mortality,

and was afflicted, for my sake, even unto death. Remember this, O Lord ! and let not so much have been endured for me in vain. Crush this proud and guilty heart of mine, and vouchsafe me a heart like Thine own,—a heart humble and contrite ; a heart pure and innocent ; a heart consecrated to Thy praise. For the future, I desire, by my reverence in Thy presence, by my constancy in visiting Thee, by my devotion and fervour in receiving Thee, to atone for my past conduct, which I now deplore. And that these my adorations may be acceptable to Thee, I here unite them with those which are ever ascending from the blessed spirits who encompass Thine Altar ; entreating Thee to accept the homage of a heart which returns to Thee, intending henceforward to love Thee only, and to act in all things with a view to Thy glory.

*Consecration of ourselves to the Sacred Heart of
Jesus.*

O adorable Jesus ! to what an excess hast thou loved me ! To renew in me thy likeness, Thou tookest upon Thee mine own, and becamest man ; to save me from hell and everlasting death, Thou didst deliver Thyself up to death, even the death of the Cross ; to shelter me from the justice of Thy Father, Thou didst

suffer Thy sacred Heart to be opened with a spear; and—oh, still more ineffable wonder!—to unite me eternally to Thyself, day by day Thou offerest Thyself as a Victim for me upon the Altar, and becomest my Food in the holy Communion. Such has been Thy surpassing love and tenderness!—And, in return for all this, what is it Thou askest of me? Thou askest of me my heart. O divine Heart of my Saviour, and can I refuse it Thee? Is it not Thine by every title? Lo! prostrate at Thy feet, I call heaven and earth to witness this my solemn consecration of it to Thy eternal Majesty. O God of my heart! O God of all goodness! I here offer Thee this most guilty, this most unworthy heart; inasmuch as, notwithstanding its wretchedness, Thou sayest that Thou art still willing to receive it. I place it at the foot of Thy Cross, that it may be washed in Thy tears and in Thy blood. I only grieve that it is so undeserving of being offered Thee, covered as it is by the wounds which sin has made, profaned as it has been by evil passions, and sullied by a thousand stains.

I offer Thee also, O Jesus! together with this heart, all its feelings, affections, desires; Thine they are, without condition, without reservation. And oh, that the hearts of all mankind were at my disposal, that I might

offer them to Thee in like manner! Oh! that the glowing transports of all the Saints and Angels, Cherubim and Seraphim, were mine, that I might consecrate them all to Thee! As it is, I have but a single heart, O my God! but that one at least shall be wholly Thine; and neither the world, nor any created thing shall have the least share in it. Alas! too long have they led it astray; but from this time forward, Thou alone shalt be my portion and my God. Know I not, that, hadst Thou but treated me according to the law of Thy justice, this heart would long since have been the prey of devouring flames? But Thy mercy spared it, and gave it a place in Thine own adorable Heart, and now gives it the sweet hope of loving Thee henceforth through eternity.

Receive, then, this heart, O my God! Yea, rather take it from me, change it and restore it me more worthy of Thee, more grateful for Thy mercies—humble, gentle, and contrite; faithful to Thy inspirations; submissive to Thy adorable will; animated and enkindled with Thy love. Thine it is, Lord; keep it Thine by Thy grace, and suffer it not to escape from Thee. Many a time before this have I given it Thee, and then miserably reclaimed it, for myself and for the world: I will do so no more. Henceforth, keep thou pos-

session of it; hide it in Thine own divine Heart; and grant that, from this time, it may be solely employed in loving Thee, blessing Thee, and praising Thee, now and for ever; through life, through death; in time, and in eternity.

Prayer to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

O most sacred Heart of immaculate and ever Virgin Mary! O inexhaustible fountain of sweetness, compassion, and love! O pattern of every virtue, and most absolute image of the adorable Heart of Jesus Christ! O thou Heart, that ever burnest with the most glowing charity! that hast loved God singly more than all the Angels and Saints together! that hast given more glory to the most Holy Trinity, by the faintest of Thy holy aspirations, than all other created beings either have given, or could have given, by their sublimest deeds!—O Heart of the Mother of our Redeemer, that hast so vividly felt our miseries! that hast suffered so much for our salvation! that hast loved us with so much warmth and tenderness! and hast merited, on every conceivable ground, the reverence, the love, the gratitude, and the confidence of all mankind!—

O Heart of the Mother of Mercy! prostrate

before thee, I honour thee with my profoundest homage; I thank thee for that most tender love and compassion wherewith thou hast been so oftentimes touched at the sight of my miseries; I thank thee for all the benefits which I have received from thy goodness; and I here unite myself in spirit with all those blessed souls, whose delight and consolation it is to honour thee, to praise thee, and to love thee.

O all lovely and loving Heart! from this time forward, next to the heart of Jesus, thou shalt be the object of my veneration, of my love, and of my tenderest devotion. Through thee will I approach my Saviour; through thee will I look to receive His graces and loving mercies. Thou shalt be my refuge in trouble, my consolation in grief, my succour in difficulty. Unto Thee will I come to learn purity, humility, meekness, and obedience; and from Thee, as from a fountain, will I draw abundantly the love of Jesus Christ my Lord, to whom be glory and benediction for ever. Amen.

Act of Spiritual Communion.

It is advisable that, at your visits to the Blessed Sacrament, you should never fail of making an act of Spiritual Communion, for which the following will suffice:—

O my Jesus! I believe that Thou art here present in the most holy Eucharist. I love

Thee above all things, and I desire to receive Thee. Since I may not now receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually, I beseech Thee, into my heart. I unite myself entirely to Thee, as though Thou hadst actually come. Suffer me not to be ever separated from Thee.

A plenary Indulgence, applicable to the souls in Purgatory, is granted to all who, with due dispositions, recite the following prayer before any image or picture of Christ crucified, praying for the needs of Holy Church, provided they confess, and come to holy Communion.

Prayer before a Crucifix, or Picture of Christ crucified.

Behold, O good and most sweet Jesus! I fall down on my knees before Thee, praying and beseeching Thee, with all the fervour of my soul, to impress in my heart lively sentiments of faith, hope, and charity, a true repentance of my sins, and a most firm resolution of amendment; whilst, with heartfelt sorrow, I consider and contemplate Thy five wounds, having before mine eyes what the Prophet David spake concerning Thee, O good Jesus: *They have pierced my hands and my feet; they have numbered all my bones.*

PSALMS,

ONE OR MORE OF WHICH MAY BE RECITED WITH PROFIT
BEFORE OR AFTER COMMUNION.

Before Communion.

PSALM V.

Verba mea auribus.

GIVE ear, O Lord, to my words ; understand my cry.
Hearken to the voice of my prayer, O my King and
my God.

For to Thee will I pray, O Lord ; in the morning Thou
shalt hear my voice.

In the morning I will stand before Thee, and will see ;
because Thou art not a God that willest iniquity.

Neither shall the wicked dwell near Thee : nor shall
the unjust abide in Thy sight.

Thou hatest all the workers of iniquity ; Thou wilt
destroy all that speak a lie.

The bloody and the deceitful man the Lord will abhor.

But as for me, in the multitude of Thy mercy I will
come into Thy house ; I will worship towards Thy holy
temple in Thy fear.

Conduct me, O Lord, in Thy justice ; because of my
enemies : direct my way in Thy sight.

For there is no truth in their mouth ; their heart is vain.

Their throat is an open sepulchre : they have dealt
deceitfully with their tongues ; judge them, O God.

R

Let them fall from their devices: according to the multitude of their wickednesses, cast them out, for they have provoked Thee, O Lord.

But let all them be glad that hope in Thee ; they shall rejoice for ever, and Thou shalt dwell in them.

And all they that love Thy name shall glory in Thee.

For Thou wilt bless the just : O Lord, Thou hast crowned us as with a shield of Thy good will.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM XII.

Usque quo Domine.

How long, O Lord, wilt Thou forget me unto the end ? how long dost Thou turn away Thy face from me ?

How long shall I take counsels in my soul, and sorrow in my heart all the day ?

How long shall my enemy be exalted over me ? Consider and hear me, O Lord my God.

Enlighten mine eyes, that I never sleep in death ; lest at any time my enemy say : I have prevailed against him.

They that trouble me will rejoice when I am moved ; but I have trusted in Thy mercy.

My heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation ; I will sing to the Lord, who giveth me good things : yea, I will sing to the name of the Lord most high.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM XXII.

Dominus regit me.

The Lord ruleth me, and I shall want nothing : He hath set me in a place of pasture.

He hath brought me up on the water of refreshment : He hath converted my soul.

He hath led me in the paths of justice ; for His own name's sake.

For though I should walk in the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evils; for Thou art with me.

Thy rod and Thy staff, they have comforted me.

Thou hast prepared a table before me, against them that afflict me.

Thou hast anointed my head with oil; and my chalice, which inebriateth me, how goodly is it?

And Thy mercy will follow me all the days of my life:

That I may dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM XXV.

Judica me, Domine.

Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in my innocence; I have put my trust in the Lord, and shall not be weakened.

Prove me, O Lord, and try me; burn my reins and my heart.

For Thy mercy is before mine eyes: and I am well pleased with Thy truth.

I have not sat with the counsel of vanity; neither will I go in with the doers of unjust things.

I have hated the assembly of the malignant; and with the wicked I will not sit.

I will wash my hands among the innocent, and will compass Thine altar, O Lord.

That I may hear the voice of Thy praise: and tell of all Thy wondrous works.

I have loved, O Lord, the beauty of Thy house; and the place where Thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul, O God, with the wicked; nor my life with bloody men.

In whose hands are iniquities; their right hand is filled with gifts.

But as for me, I have walked in my innocence: redeem me, and have mercy on me.

My foot hath stood in the direct way: in the churches I will bless thee, O Lord.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM XLI.

Quemadmodum desiderat.

As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after Thee, O God.

My soul hath thirsted after the strong living God; when shall I come and appear before the face of God?

My tears have been my bread day and night, whilst it is said to me daily, Where is now thy God?

These things I remembered, and poured out my soul within me: for I shall go over into the place of the wonderful tabernacle, even to the house of God.

With the voice of joy and praise: the noise of one feasting.

Why art thou sad, O my soul? and why dost thou trouble me?

Hope in God; for I will still give praise to Him: the salvation of my countenance and my God.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM LIII.

Deus, in nomine tuo.

Save me, O God, by Thy name, and judge me in Thy strength.

O God, hear my prayer: give ear to the words of my mouth.

For strangers have risen up against me; and the mighty have sought after my soul: and they have not set God before their eyes.

For behold, God is my helper: and the Lord is the protector of my soul.

Turn back the evils upon mine enemies: and cut them off in Thy truth.

I will freely sacrifice to Thee, and will give praise, O God, to Thy name, because it is good.

For Thou hast delivered me out of all trouble: and mine eye hath looked down upon my enemies.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM LX.

Exaudi, Deus.

Hear, O God, my supplication; be attentive to my prayer.

To Thee have I cried from the ends of the earth: when my heart was in anguish, Thou hast exalted me on a rock.

Thou hast conducted me, for Thou hast been my hope; a tower of strength against the face of the enemy.

In Thy tabernacle I shall dwell for ever; I shall be protected under the covert of Thy wings.

For Thou, my God, hast heard my prayer; Thou hast given an inheritance to them that fear Thy name.

Thou wilt add days to the days of the king; his years even to generation and generation.

He abideth for ever in the sight of God; His mercy and truth, who shall search?

So will I sing a psalm to Thy name for ever and ever; that I may pay my vows from day to day.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM LXX.

In te, Domine, speravi.

In Thee, O Lord, I have hoped, let me never be put to confusion; deliver me in Thy justice. and rescue me.

Incline Thine ear unto me, and save me.

Be Thou unto me a God, a protector and a place of strength; that thou mayest make me safe.

For thou art my firmament and my refuge.

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the sinner, and out of the hand of the transgressor of the law, and of the unjust.

For Thou art my patience, O Lord: my hope, O Lord, from my youth.

By Thee have I been confirmed from the womb: from my mother's womb Thou art my protector.

Of Thee shall I continually sing: I am become unto many as a wonder, but Thou art a strong helper.

R 2

Let my mouth be filled with praise, that I may sing
Thy glory ; Thy greatness all the day long

Cast me not off in the time of old age ; when my strength
shall fail, do not Thou forsake me.

For my enemies have spoken against me, and they that
watched my soul have consulted together.

Saying, God hath forsaken him : pursue him and take
him, for there is none to deliver him.

O God, be not Thou far from me : O my God, make
haste to my help.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXVIII.

Beati immaculati.

Blessed are the undefiled in the way, who walk in the
law of the Lord.

Blessed are they that search His testimonies, that seek
Him with their whole heart.

For they that work iniquity have not walked in His
ways.

Thou hast commanded Thy commandments to be kept
most diligently.

Oh, that my ways may be directed to keep Thy justi-
fications.

Then shall I not be confounded, when I shall look into
all Thy commandments.

I will praise Thee with uprightness of heart, when I
shall have learned the judgments of Thy justice.

I will keep Thy justifications : oh ! do not Thou utterly
forsake me.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXX.

Levavi oculos.

I have lifted up mine eyes to the mountains, from
whence help shall come to me.

My help is from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.

May He not suffer thy foot to be moved : neither let Him slumber that keepeth thee.

Behold, He shall neither slumber nor sleep that keepeth Israel.

The Lord is thy keeper, the Lord is thy protection upon thy right hand.

The sun shall not burn thee by day ; nor the moon by night.

The Lord keepeth thee from all evil : may the Lord keep thy soul.

May the Lord keep thy coming in and thy going out, from henceforth, now, and for ever.

PSALM CXXII.

Ad te levavi.

To Thee have I lifted up mine eyes who dwellest in heaven.

Behold, as the eyes of servants are on the hands of their masters ;

As the eyes of the handmaid are on the hands of her mistress, so are our eyes unto the Lord our God, until He have mercy upon us.

Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us ; for we are greatly filled with contempt.

For our soul is greatly filled ; we are a reproach to the rich and contempt to the proud.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

After Communion.

PSALM XIX.

Exaudiat te Dominus.

MAY the Lord hear thee in the day of tribulation ; may the name of the God of Jacob protect thee.

May He send thee help from the Sanctuary : and defend thee out of Sion.

May He be mindful of all thy sacrifices : and may thy whole burnt-offering be made fat.

May He give thee according to thine own heart, and confirm all thy counsels.

We will rejoice in thy salvation ; and in the name of our God we shall be exalted.

The Lord fulfil all thy petitions ; now have I known that the Lord hath saved His anointed.

He will hear him from His holy heaven : the salvation of His right hand is in powers.

Some trust in chariots and some in horses ; but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God.

They are bound, and have fallen ; but we are risen, and are set upright.

O Lord, save the king ; and hear us in the day that we call upon Thee.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM XXVI.

Dominus illuminatio.

The Lord is my light and my salvation : whom shall I fear ?

The Lord is the protector of my life ; of whom shall I be afraid ?

One thing I have asked of the Lord, this will I seek

after : that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

That I may see the delight of the Lord : and may visit His temple.

For He hath hidden me in His tabernacle ; in the day of evils He hath protected me in the secret place of His tabernacle.

He hath exalteth me upon a rock ; and now He hath lifted up my head above my enemies.

I have gone round, and have offered up in His tabernacle a sacrifice of jubilation : I will sing and recite a psalm to the Lord.

Hear, O Lord, my voice, with which I have cried to Thee : have mercy on me, and hear me.

My heart hath said to Thee : My face hath sought Thee ; Thy face, O Lord, will I still seek.

Turn not away Thy face from me, decline not in Thy wrath from Thy servant.

Be Thou my helper, forsake me not ; do not. Thou despise me, O God, my Saviour.

For my father and my mother have left me ; but the Lord hath taken me up.

Set me, O Lord, a law in Thy way ; and guide me in the right path, because of my enemies.

Deliver me not over to the will of them that trouble me : for unjust witnesses have risen up against me, and iniquity hath lied to itself.

I believe to see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living.

Expect the Lord, do manfully, and let thy heart take courage, and wait thou for the Lord.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM LXVI.

Deus misereatur.

. May God have mercy on us and bless us : may He cause the light of His countenance to shine upon us, and may He have mercy on us.

That we may know Thy way upon earth ; Thy salvation in all nations.

Let the people confess to Thee, O God : let all people give praise to Thee.

Let the nations be glad and rejoice ; for Thou judgest the people with justice, and directest the nations upon earth.

Let the people, O God, confess to Thee ; let all people give praise to Thee : the earth hath yielded her fruit.

May God, our God bless us ; may God bless us, and all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM XCIX.

Jubilate Deo.

Sing joyfully to God, all the earth ; serve ye the Lord with gladness.

Come in before His presence with exceeding great joy.

Know ye that the Lord He is God ; He made us and not we ourselves.

We are His people and the sheep of his pasture. Go ye into His gates with praise, into His courts with hymns, and give glory to Him.

Praise ye His name ; for the Lord is sweet, His mercy endureth for ever, and His truth to generation and generation.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CX.

Confitebor tibi, Domine.

I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart ; in the counsel of the just, and in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord : sought out according to all His wills.

His work is praise and magnificence : and His justice continueth for ever and ever.

He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and gracious Lord : He hath given food to them that fear Him.

He will be mindful for ever of His covenant : He will shew forth to His people the power of His works.

That He may give them the inheritance of the Gentiles ; the works of His hands are truth and judgment.

All His commandments are faithful ; confirmed for ever and ever, made in truth and equity.

He had sent redemption to His people ; He hath commanded His covenant for ever.

Holy and terrible is His name ; the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

A good understanding to all that do it ; His praise continueth for ever and ever.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXII.

Laudate, pueri.

Praise the Lord, ye children : praise ye the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, from henceforth, now, and for ever.

From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same, the name of the Lord is worthy of praise.

The Lord is high above all nations : and His glory above the heavens.

Who is like the Lord our God, who dwelleth on high, and looketh down on the low things in heaven and in earth ?

Raising up the needy from the earth, and lifting up the poor out of the dunghill :

That He may place Him with princes, with the princes of His people.

Who maketh a barren woman to dwell in a house, the joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXIV.

Dilexi.

I have loved, because the Lord will hear the voice of my prayer.

Because He hath inclined His ear unto me: and in my days I will call upon Him.

The sorrows of death have compassed me: and the perils of hell have found me.

I met with trouble and sorrow; and I called upon the name of the Lord.

O Lord, deliver my soul: the Lord is merciful and just, and our God sheweth mercy.

The Lord is the keeper of little ones: I was humbled and He delivered me.

Turn, O my soul, into thy rest: for the Lord hath been bountiful to thee.

For He hath delivered my soul from death; mine eyes from tears, my feet from falling.

I will please the Lord in the land of the living.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXXXII.

Ecce quam bonum.

Behold how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity.

Like the precious ointment on the head, that ran down upon the beard, the beard of Aaron.

Which ran down to the skirt of his garment, as the dew of Hermon which descendeth upon Mount Sion.

For there the Lord hath commanded blessing, and life for evermore.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXLIV.

Exaltabo te, Deus.

I will extol Thee, O God, my King: and I will bless Thy name for ever, yea for ever and ever.

Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name for ever, yea for ever and ever.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised: and of His greatness there is no end.

Generation and generation shall praise Thy works: and they shall declare Thy power.

They shall speak of the magnificence of the glory of Thy holiness; and shall tell Thy wondrous works.

And they shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts; and shall declare Thy greatness.

They shall publish the memory of the abundance of Thy sweetness; and shall rejoice in Thy justice.

The Lord is gracious and merciful: patient and plenteous in mercy.

The Lord is sweet to all: and his tender mercies are over all His works.

Let all thy works, O Lord, praise Thee: and let Thy Saints bless Thee.

They shall speak of the glory of Thy kingdom; and shall tell of Thy power.

To make Thy might known to the sons of men: and the glory of the magnificence of Thy kingdom.

Thy kingdom is a kingdom of all ages: and Thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

The Lord is faithful in all His words; and holy in all His works.

The Lord lifteth up all that fall: and setteth up all that are cast down.

The eyes of all hope in Thee, O Lord: and Thou givest them meat in due season.

Thou openest Thine hand, and fillest with blessing every living creature.

The Lord is just in all His ways; and holy in all His works.

The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him: to all that call upon him in truth.

He will do the will of them that fear Him; and He will hear their prayer, and save them.

The Lord keepeth all them that love Him; but all the wicked He will destroy.

My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord : and let all flesh bless His holy name for ever, yea for ever and ever.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

PSALM CXLVIII.

Laudate Dominum de cælis.

Praise ye the Lord from the heavens : praise ye Him in the high places.

Praise ye Him, all His angels : praise ye Him, all His hosts.

Praise ye Him, O sun and moon : praise Him, all ye stars and light.

Praise Him, ye heavens of heavens : and let all the waters that are above the heavens praise the name of the Lord.

For He spoke, and they were made : He commanded, and they were created.

He hath established them for ever, and for ages of ages : He hath made a decree, and it shall not pass away.

Praise the Lord from the earth, ye dragons and all ye deeps.

Fire, hail, snow, ice, stormy winds, which fulfil His word.

Mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars.

Beasts and all cattle, serpents and feathered fowls.

Kings of the earth and all people ; princes and all judges of the earth.

Young men and maidens, old men and children, praise the name of the Lord : for His name alone is exalted.

The praise of Him is above heaven and earth : and He hath exalted the horn of His people.

A hymn to all His Saints ; to the children of Israel, a people drawing nigh unto Him. Alleluia.

Glory be to the Father, &c.

THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN.

Benedicite omnia opera.

O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord : praise Him and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye angels of the Lord, bless the Lord: O ye heavens, bless the Lord.

O all ye waters that are above the heavens, bless the Lord: O all ye powers of the Lord, bless the Lord.

O ye sun and moon, bless the Lord: O ye stars of heaven, bless the Lord.

O all ye showers and dew, bless the Lord: O all ye spirits of God, bless the Lord.

O ye fire and heat, bless the Lord: O ye heat and cold, bless the Lord.

O ye dews and hoar frosts, bless the Lord: O ye frost and cold, bless the Lord.

O ye ice and snow, bless the Lord: O ye nights and days, bless the Lord.

O ye light and darkness, bless the Lord: O ye lightnings and clouds, bless the Lord.

O let the earth bless the Lord: let it praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye mountains and hills, bless the Lord: O all ye green things of the earth, bless the Lord.

O ye fountains, bless the Lord: O ye seas and rivers, bless the Lord.

O ye whales and all that move in the waters, bless the Lord: O all ye fowls of the air, bless the Lord.

O all ye beasts and cattle, bless the Lord: O ye sons of men, bless the Lord.

O let Israel bless the Lord: let them praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye priests of the Lord, bless the Lord: O ye servants of the Lord, bless the Lord.

O ye spirits and souls of the just, bless the Lord: O ye holy and humble of heart, bless the Lord.

O Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, bless ye the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

Let us bless the Father, and the Son, with the Holy Ghost: let us praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, in the firmament of heaven, and worthy to be praised and glorified and exalted above all for ever. Amen.

Hymns on the Blessed Eucharist,

WITH OTHERS. *

Pange lingua gloriosi.

SING, my tongue, the Saviour's glory,
Of His flesh the mystery sing ;
Of the Blood, all price exceeding,
Shed by our immortal King,
Destin'd, for the world's redemption,
From a noble womb to spring.

Of a pure and spotless Virgin
Born for us on earth below,
He, as Man with man conversing,
Stay'd the seeds of truth to sow ;
Then He clos'd in solemn order
Wondrously his life of woe.

On the night of that Last Supper,
Seated with his chosen band,
He the paschal victim eating,
First fulfils the Law's command ;
Then, as Food to all His brethren
Gives Himself with His own hand.

Word made Flesh, the bread of nature
By His word to Flesh He turns ;
Wine into His Blood He changes :—
What though sense no change discerns ?
Only be the heart in earnest,
Faith her lesson quickly learns.

[*Tantum ergo Sacramentum.*]

Down in adoration falling,
Lo ! the sacred Host we hail ;

* From *Lyra Catholica*.

Lo ! o'er ancient forms departing,
 Newer rites of grace prevail ;
 Faith, for all defects supplying,
 Where the feeble senses fail.

To the Everlasting Father,
 And the Son who reigns on high,
 With the Holy Ghost proceeding
 Forth from each eternally,
 Be salvation, honour, blessing,
 Might, and endless majesty.

Verbum supernum prodiens.

THE Word, descending from above,
 Though with the Father still on high,
 Went forth upon his work of love,
 And soon to life's last eve drew nigh.

He shortly to a death accurs'd
 By a disciple shall be given ;
 But to His twelve disciples, first
 He gives Himself, the Bread from heaven.

Himself, in either kind He gave ;
 He gave His flesh, He gave His blood ;
 Of flesh and blood all men are made ;
 And He of man would be the food.

At birth, our brother He became ;
 At board, Himself as food He gives ;
 To ransom us He died in shame ;
 As our reward, in bliss He lives.

[O salutaris Hostia.]

O saving Victim ! opening wide
 The gate of heav'n to man below !
 Our foes press on from every side ;—
 Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow.

To Thy great name be endless praise,
 Immortal Godhead, One in Three !
 Oh, grant us endless length of days,
 In our true native land, with Thee !

Lauda Sion Salvatorem.

SION, lift thy voice, and sing ;
 Praise thy Saviour and thy King ;
 Praise with hymns thy Shepherd true ;
 Strive thy best to praise Him well ;
 Yet doth He all praise excel,
 None can ever reach His due.

See to-day before us laid
 The living and life-giving Bread !
 Theme for praise and joy profound !
 The same which at the sacred board
 Was, by our incarnate Lord,
 Giv'n to His Apostles round.

Let the praise be loud and high ;
 Sweet and tranquil be the joy
 Felt to-day in every breast ;
 On this festival divine,
 Which records the origin
 Of the glorious Eucharist.

On this Table of the King,
 Our new Paschal offering
 Brings to end the olden rite ;
 Here, for empty shadows fled,
 Is reality instead ;
 Here, instead of darkness, light.

His own act, at supper seated,
 Christ ordain'd to be repeated,
 In His memory divine ;
 Wherefore now, with adoration,
 We the Host of our salvation
 Consecrate from bread and wine.

Hear what holy Church maintaineth,
That the bread its substance changeth
Into Flesh, the wine to Blood.

Doth it pass thy comprehending?
Faith, the law of sight transcending,
Leaps to things not understood.

Here, beneath these signs are hidden
Priceless things, to sense forbidden;
Signs, not things, is all we see:—
Flesh from bread, and Blood from wine;
Yet is Christ, in either sign,
All entire confess'd to be.

They, too, who of Him partake,
Sever not, nor rend, nor break,
But entire their Lord receive.
Whether one or thousands eat,
All receive the self-same meat,
Nor the less for others leave.

Both the wicked and the good
Eat of this celestial food;
But with ends how opposite!
Here 'tis life; and there 'tis death—
The same, yet issuing to each
In a difference infinite.

Nor a single doubt retain;
When they break the Host in twain,
But that in each part remains
What was in the whole before;
Since the simple sign alone
Suffers change in state or form,
The Signified remaining One
And the Same for evermore.

[*Ecce panis angelorum.*]

Lo! upon the Altar lies,
Hidden deep from human eyes,
Bread of Angels from the skies,
Made the food of mortal man:

Children's meat to dogs denied ;
 In old types foresignified ;
 In the manna Heaven-supplied,
 Isaac, and the Paschal Lamb.

Jesu ! Shepherd of the sheep !
 Thou Thy flock in safety keep,
 Living Bread ! Thy life supply ;
 Strengthen us, or else we die !
 Fill us with celestial grace :
 Thou, who feedest us below !
 Source of all we have or know !
 Grant that with Thy Saints above,
 Sitting at the feast of love,
 We may see Thee face to face.

Adoro Te devote latens Deitas.

O GODHEAD hid, devoutly I adore Thee,
 Who truly art within the forms before me ;
 To Thee my heart I bow with bended knee,
 As failing quite in contemplating Thee.

Sight, touch, and taste in Thee are each deceiv'd
 The ear alone most safely is believ'd ;
 I believe all the Son of God has spoken—
 Than Truth's own word there is no truer token.

God only on the Cross lay hid from view ;
 But here lies hid at once the Manhood too :
 And I, in both professing my belief,
 Make the same prayer as the repentant thief.

Thy wounds, as Thomas saw, I do not see ;
 Yet Thee confess my Lord and God to be :
 Make me believe Thee ever more and more ;
 In Thee my hope, in Thee my love to store.

O thou Memorial of our Lord's own dying !
 O living Bread to mortals life supplying !
 Make Thou my soul henceforth on Thee to live ;
 Ever a taste of Heavenly sweetness give.

O loving Pelican ! O Jesu, Lord !
 Unclean I am, but cleanse me in Thy blood ;
 Of which a single drop, for sinners spilt,
 Can purge the entire world from all its guilt.

Jesu ! whom for the present veil'd I see,
 What I so thirst for, oh, vouchsafe to me :
 That I may see Thy countenance unfolding,
 And may be blest Thy glory in beholding.

[The following is usually repeated after every stanza.]

Jesu, eternal Shepherd ! hear our cry !
 Increase the faith of all whose souls on Thee rely.

Ave verum corpus natum.

HAIL to Thee ! true Body, sprung
 From the Virgin Mary's womb !
 The same that on the Cross was hung,
 And bore for man the bitter doom !
 Thou, whose side was pierc'd, and flow'd
 Both with water and with blood ;
 Suffer us to taste of Thee,
 In our life's last agony.
 O kind, O loving One !
 O sweet Jesu ! Mary's Son !

THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS.

Jesu : dulcis memoria.

JESU ! the very thought of Thee
 With sweetness fills my breast ;
 But sweeter far Thy face to see,
 And in Thy presence rest.
 Nor voice can sing, nor heart can frame,
 Nor can the memory find
 A sweeter sound than Thy blest name,
 O Saviour of mankind !

O hope of every contrite heart,
O joy of all the meek,
To those who fall, how kind Thou art !
How good to those who seek !

But what to those that find ? ah ! this
Nor tongue nor pen can shew ;
The love of Jesus, what it is
None but his lov'd ones know.

Jesu ! our only joy be Thou,
As Thou our prize wilt be ;
Jesu ! be Thou our glory now,
And through eternity.

O JESU ! King most wonderful !
Thou conqueror renown'd !
Thou sweetness most ineffable !
In whom all joys are found !

When once Thou visitest the heart,
Then truth begins to shine ;
Then earthly vanities depart ;
Then kindles love divine.

O Jesu ! Light of all below !
Thou Fount of life and fire !
Surpassing all the joys we know,
And all we can desire :

May every heart confess Thy name,
And ever Thee adore ;
And seeking Thee, itself inflame
To seek Thee more and more.

Thee may our tongues for ever bless ;
Thee may we love alone ;
And ever in our lives express
The image of thine own.

O JESU ! Thou the beauty art
Of angel worlds above ;
Thy name is music to the heart,
Enchanting it with love.

Celestial sweetness unalloy'd !
 Who eat Thee hunger still ;
 Who drink of Thee still feel a void,
 Which nought but Thou can fill.
 O my sweet Jesus ! hear the sighs
 Which unto Thee I send ;
 To Thee my inmost spirit cries,
 My being's hope and end !
 Stay with us, Lord, and with Thy light
 Illume the soul's abyss ;
 Scatter the darkness of our night,
 And fill the world with bliss.
 O Jesu ! spotless Virgin flower ;
 Our love and joy ; to Thee
 Be praise, beatitude, and power,
 Through all eternity.

HYMN TO THE SACRED HEART.

Quicumque certum quæritis.

ALL ye who seek a certain cure
 In trouble and distress,
 Whatever sorrow vex the mind,
 Or guilt the soul oppress :
 Jesu, who gave Himself for you
 Upon the Cross to die,
 Opens to you His sacred Heart,—
 Oh, to that Heart draw nigh !
 Ye hear how kindly He invites :
 Ye hear His words so blest :
 " All ye that labour, come to Me,
 And I will give you rest."
 What meeker than the Saviour's Heart ?—
 As on the Cross He lay,
 It did His murderers forgive,
 And for their pardon pray.

O Heart ! thou joy of Saints on high !
 Thou Hope of sinners here !
 Attracted by those loving words,
 To Thee I lift my prayer.

Wash Thou my wounds in that dear Blood,
 Which forth from Thee doth flow ;
 New grace, new hope inspire ; a new
 And better heart bestow.

HYMN TO THE HOLY GHOST.

Veni Creator Spiritus.

COME, O Creator Spirit !
 Visit this soul of thine :
 This heart of Thy creating
 Fill Thou with grace divine.

Who Paraclete art call'd !
 The gift of God above !
 Pure Unction ! holy Fire !
 And Fount of life and love !

Finger of God's right hand !
 The Father's promise true,
 Who sevenfold gifts bestowest !
 Who dost the tongue endow !

Pour love into our hearts ;
 Our reason touch with light ;
 Make strong our human frailty
 With Thy supernal might.

Cast far our deadly Foe ;
 Thy peace in us fulfil ;
 So, Thee before us leading,
 May we escape each ill.

The Father, and the Son,
 Through Thee may we receive ;
 In Thee, from Both proceeding,
 Through endless time believe.

Praise to the Father be ;
 Praise to the Son who rose ;
 And praise to Thee, blest Spirit !
 While age on ages flows.

HYMNS TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN.

Quis te canat mortalium.

WHAT mortal tongue can sing Thy praise,
 Dear Mother of the Lord ?—
 To Angels only it belongs
 Thy glory to record.

Who born of man can penetrate
 Thy soul's majestic shrine?
 Who can thy mighty gifts unfold,
 Or rightly them divine?

Say, Virgin, what sweet force was that,
 Which from the Father's breast
 Drew forth His coeternal Son,
 To be thy bosom's guest ?

'Twas not thy guileless faith alone
 That lifted thee so high ;
 'Twas not thy pure seraphic love,
 Or peerless chastity :

But, oh, it was thy lowliness,
 Well pleasing to the Lord,
 That made thee worthy to become
 The Mother of the Word.

Oh, Loftiest ! whose humility
 So sweet it was to see !
 That God, forgetful of Himself,
 Abas'd Himself to thee !

Praise to the Father, with the Son,
 And Holy Ghost, through whom
 The Word eternal was conceiv'd
 Within the Virgin's womb.

Ave Maris Stella.

HAIL, thou star of ocean ;
 Portal of the sky !
 Ever Virgin Mother
 Of the Lord most high !

Oh ! by Gabriel's Ave,
 Utter'd long ago,
 Eva's name reversing,
 'Stablish peace below.

Break the captive's fetters ;
 Light on blindness pour ;
 All our ills expelling,
 Every bliss implore.

Show thyself a mother ;
 Offer Him our sighs,
 Who for us Incarnate
 Did not thee despise.

Virgin of all virgins !
 To thy shelter take us ;
 Gentlest of the gentle !
 Chaste and gentle make us.

Still as on we journey,
 Help our weak endeavour ;
 Till with thee and Jesus
 We rejoice for ever.

Through the highest Heaven,
 To the Almighty Three,
 Father, Son, and Spirit,
 One same glory be.

Memento rerum Conditor.

REMEMBER, O Creator Lord !
 That in the Virgin's sacred womb
 Thou wast conceiv'd, and of her flesh
 Didst our mortality assume.

Mother of grace, O Mary blest !
 To thee, sweet fount of love, we fly ;
 Shield us through life, and take us hence
 To thy dear bosom when we die.

O Jesu ! born of Virgin bright,
 Immortal glory be to Thee ;
 Praise to the Father infinite,
 And Holy Ghost eternally.

HYMN OF ST. FRANCIS XAVIER.

O Deus, ego amo Te.

MY God, I love Thee, not because
 I hope for Heaven thereby ;
 Nor because they, who love Thee not,
 Must burn eternally.

Thou, O my Jesus ! Thou didst me
 Upon the Cross embrace ;
 For me didst bear the nails and spear,
 And manifold disgrace ;

And griefs and torments numberless ;
 And sweat of agony ;
 E'en death itself—and all for one
 Who was thine enemy.

Then why, O blessed Jesu Christ !
 Should I not love Thee well ;
 Not for the sake of winning Heaven,
 Or of escaping Hell :

Not with the hope of gaining aught ;
 Not seeking a reward ;
 But, as Thyself hast loved me,
 O ever-loving Lord ?

E'en so I love Thee, and will love,
 And in Thy praise will sing ;
 Solely because Thou art my God,
 And my eternal King.

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.*

WHAT happiness can equal mine?
 I've found the object of my love;
 My Saviour and my Lord divine
 Is come to me from Heav'n above.
 He makes my heart His own abode,
 His flesh becomes my daily bread;
 He pours on me His healing blood,
 And with His life my soul is fed.
 My love is mine, and I am His;
 In me He dwells, in Him I live:
 Where could I taste a purer bliss?
 What greater boon could Jesus give?
 O royal banquet! heav'nly feast!
 O flowing fount of life and grace!
 Where God the Giver, man the guest,
 Meet and unite in sweet embrace.
 Dear Jesus, now my heart is thine,
 Oh, may it never from thee fly;
 My God, be Thou for ever mine,
 And I Thine own eternally.
 No more, O Satan, thee I fear!
 O world! thy charms I now despise!
 For Christ Himself is with me here,
 My joy, my life, my paradise.

ANOTHER HYMN OF THANKSGIVING AFTER COMMUNION.

AH! what is this enchanting calm
 Which thus with peace my bosom fills,
 Which o'er my spirit pours a balm,
 And through my inmost being thrills?
 Is there some seraph hither sent,
 Diffusing sweetness from his wings,
 To steep my bosom in content
 Unknown, unfelt, from earthly things?

* From *Catholic Hymns*.

No! something purer far must dwell
 Within this raptur'd soul of mine;
 'Tis what no mortal tongue can tell,
 'Tis more than heav'nly, 'tis divine.

My God! my Jesus! it is Thou
 Art ravishing my heart with bliss;
 Thy presence is within me now:
 Ah! could I ask a boon like this?

Yes! stooping from Thy throne above,
 Thou wilt not dwell from man apart;
 Thy dearest home becomes, through love,
 The tabernacle of my heart.

HYMN OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE EVENING AFTER
 COMMUNION.*

COME, let me for a moment cast
 All earthly thoughts away,
 And muse upon the sacred gift
 Which I receiv'd to-day.

This morning that eternal Lord,
 Who is my judge to be,
 Came to this lowly tenement,
 And stay'd awhile with me.

With His celestial Flesh and Blood,
 My fainting soul He fed;
 With tender words of grace and love,
 My heart He comforted.

He who of all that live and breathe
 Is all the life and breath,
 This morning deign'd to visit me
 In this my house of death!

* From "The Masque of Mary, with other Poems, by Edward Caswall, of the Oratory, Birmingham, Author of *Lyra Catholica*, &c. London: Burns and Lambert."

He, whose immensity transcends
Creation's utmost goal,
This morning deign'd to be confin'd
Within my finite soul!

He who in endless wealth abounds,
The world's Possessor blest,
This morning deign'd, O wondrous thought!
To be by me possess'd!

He who in awful Godhead sits
Upon His throne on high,
This morning enter'd my abode,
In His Humanity!

He, who for me, a trembling babe,
On Mary's heart reclin'd,
This morning in my heart and flesh
His Deity enshrin'd!

O soul of mine! reflect, reflect;
Consider, one by one,
What marvels of surpassing grace
Thy God in thee has done.

His tender love with love repay;
Extol His sacred Name;
To all the world His greatness tell,
His graciousness proclaim.

PRAYER TO JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT.

O JESU CHRIST, remember,
When Thou shalt come again,
Upon the clouds of Heaven,
With all Thy shining train;

When every eye shall see Thee
In Deity reveal'd,
Who now upon this altar
In silence art concealed;—

Remember then, O Saviour,
I supplicate of Thee,
That here I bow'd before Thee,
Upon my bended knee;—

That here I own'd Thy Presence,
And did not Thee deny;
And glorified Thy greatness,
Though hid from human eye.

Accept, divine Redeemer,
The homage of my praise;
Be Thou the light and honour,
And glory of my days.

Be Thou my consolation
When death is drawing nigh;
Be Thou my only treasure
Through all eternity.

THE END.

20 N060

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